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5 Cents.

WILD WEST

WEEKLY.

YOUNG WILD WEST'S LUCKY DROP

OR

ARIETTA AND THE OUTLAWS

AND OTHER STORIES

By An Old Scout

Wild saw the canoe as it swung around with the swift current. He nerved himself for the task before him. But just as he was about to open fire on the villains the tree gave way and down he went with it.

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YOUNG WILD WEST'S LUCKY DROP

Last Western Young Wild West Story
OR

ARIETTA AND THE OUTLAWS

By AN OLD SCOUT

CHAPTER I.

THE PLACARD AT THE SIDE OF THE TRAIL.

As Young Wild West and the friends who traveled with him on his horseback rides, in search of excitement and adventure, were riding over a lonely trail in the Rocky Mountains they suddenly came upon a big placard that was nailed to a big pine tree.

Naturally the party stopped to read it, and when the well-known boy hero, who was known as the Champion Deadshot of the West, had glanced over the words he gave a nod of satisfaction, and said:

"Here is something for us, I reckon. What do you think of it, boys?"

The placard was gotten up briefly and contained the following:

\$1,000 REWARD!

The above sum will be paid for information that will lead to the arrest of the gang that is called the "MOUNTAIN OUTLAWS." An additional reward of \$500 will be paid for the body of the leader, Dan Hubbard, dead or alive! (Signed) P. HASTINGS, Sheriff.

Cheyenne Charlie, the scout, and Jim Dart, a Wyoming boy, who were the partners of Young Wild West, read the placard carefully, and then the former answered:

"Looks all right to me, Wild. Gang of outlaws, eh? There must be some kind of a place not very far from here. We've been travelin' since early mornin', an' we didn't see hide nor hair of anything that looked like civilization, as you call it. But here, right after we strike a well-beaten trail, we come to this here notice of a reward. A thousand dollars will be paid for any one who rounds up the Mountain Outlaws, an' an extra five hundred will be give for Dan Hubbard, the leader, dead or alive. How about it, Jim? Do you think us two kin help Wild an' clean up the gang an' git the fifteen hundred dollars?"

"I reckon if Wild undertakes it we'll do it all right," Dart answered, quickly.

"What have you got to say, girls?" the young deadshot asked, as he turned to the riders who had brought their horses to a halt right behind his two partners.

They were Arietta Murdock, his golden-haired sweetheart; Anna, the wife of Cheyenne Charlie, and Eloise Gardner, Jim Dart's sweetheart.

"Oh, I suppose you will call this a bit of 'luck, Wild," Arietta answered smilingly. "You are never content unless you are engaged in hunting down bad white men or Indians.

Of course you should endeavor to corral the Mountain Outlaws, and deliver the leader, dead or alive, to the sheriff. I'll help you all I can, that is certain."

"That's the way to talk, little girl!" the young deadshot exclaimed, as he looked at her admiringly. "Of course Anna and Eloise don't feel exactly that way. As they were not born and brought up in the West, they can't be expected to have as much nerve as you. But I am sure they are willing for us to go ahead and look for the Mountain Outlaws."

"Of course we are, Wild," the scout's wife declared.

"It would matter little whether we were exactly willing or not," Eloise added, with a smile. "But as you are continually looking for excitement and adventures, I suppose here is the chance to keep going for a while."

The party of riders were well mounted, and had a pair of pack-horses that carried the camping outfit and supplies with them.

These were in charge of two Chinamen who were brothers bearing the names of Hop Wah and Wing Wah, who had long been servants for Young Wild West and his friends.

The young deadshot was mounted on his sorrel stallion, Spitfire, while his sweetheart rode her cream-white broncho, Snowflake.

All the others had horses that were as good as money could buy, so there was nothing that they needed in that line.

Wild and his partners had incomes that were more than sufficient to enable them to live in luxury if they chose to do so.

But their hobby was to keep on the go all the time and search out the wildest parts of the region known as the Wild West at the time of which we write.

The spot where we find them on an afternoon in late spring was almost in the very heart of the Rockies in the State of Colorado.

Mining camps were well scattered about through this region of the country, though very often it would take two or three days' travel to reach one of them.

The party had taken a short cut from their last stopping-place, having no particular destination in view; but now having struck the trail and read the placard, they felt that they were duty-bound to look for a camping-place as soon as possible, and then start in on their quest for the outlaws.

The trail showed every evidence of being used frequently.

Deep wagon ruts could be seen where the ground was soft, and the prints of horses' hoofs were so plentiful that it almost looked as if there was a daily travel to and fro.

After again reading the placard, Young Wild West turned to his sweetheart and said:

"Well, Et, suppose we ride a little further along the trail. If I am not mistaken, I hear the sounds of running water. It will be sunset in a couple of hours, so if we strike a good place we may as well go into camp."

"That's right, Wild," the girl answered, and then she promptly started her horse along the trail.

Wild quickly caught up with her, the rest following, Hop and Wing bringing up the rear as they generally did.

The young deadshot was not mistaken when he said he heard the sounds of running water.

They did not have to go more than two hundred feet before they came to a sharp turn in the trail.

To the left was the mouth of a rather wide gully which was fringed on either side by stunted trees and a bunch of vegetation of the smaller order such as vines and the like.

Trickling through this was a good-sized brook, while on either bank the grass grew in abundance.

"Here we are, boys," the young deadshot called out, as he turned and nodded to his two partners. "I reckon you can't do any better than this."

"Right you are, Wild," came from the scout, while Jim Dart gave a nod of approval.

Then they all turned from the trail and rode down to the brook.

Young Wild West remained in the saddle long enough to pick out a good spot for the two Chinamen to erect the tents, and when he found it he at once gave them orders to proceed.

All hands dismounted, and while the two Chinamen were unloading the pack-horses the young deadshot and his two partners unsaddled the rest of the steeds and proceeded to tie them with lariats where they could get at the grass and have a chance to drink from the brook at the same time.

Hop and Wing had a system about it, and the way they went ahead with their work was really amazing.

Once the pack-horses had been relieved of their loads they turned their immediate attention to putting up the two tents that were used as a sleeping quarters by the members of the little party.

Then while Charlie and Jim looked after the pack animals and the two horses the heathens had been riding, Wild and the girls turned their attention to sorting over the outfit, so the arrangements would be completed right away to make the camp in presentable shape.

This was not because they expected any one to call upon them, for it was hardly likely that such a thing would happen; but they always did it that way, unless it was rather late when they halted for the night.

Then the supper would come first.

But there was plenty of time for that now, and hence they proceeded as has been described.

They had been lucky in shooting all the game they needed, and had quite an amount of it with them now.

This added to the regular stock of food they always carried with them made them well fixed, indeed, and if it had been necessary for them to remain right there for nearly a week they would not have gone short on their food.

They had come down a little slope into the gully, and the edge of the trail could be seen as they turned rather sharply to the right, not more than a couple of hundred feet from where they had pitched their camp.

"Well," said Young Wild West, after everything had been fixed up to the satisfaction of them all, "I reckon we could hardly miss seeing any one go along the trail. We'll just take things easy while Wing is preparing the supper."

"Lat light, Misler Wild," Hop Wah spoke up, smiling blandly. "Me gittee plenty wood and len me takee thlins easy, too, so be. Me velly smartee Chinee. My blother allee samee fool Chinee. He pretty goodee cookee, though."

"Shuttee uppee, Hop!" the cook retorted, angrily.

"There they go ag'in!" Cheyenne Charlie exclaimed. "Always ready to quarrel."

"Lat allee light, Misler Charlie," Hop retorted. "One timee my fool blother thlinkee he allee samee likee Melican sportee. Len me comee long and showee him lat he no knowee velly muchee. He feelee velly muchee bad, so be, but no say something. Ever since len he workee allee light and sleepee velly muchee. Me velly smartee Chinee. Me makee plenty fun. Allee samee gloat magician. Makee bad ledskins and outlaws lun likee anything. Velly muchee fightee, allee samee Young Wild West and his partners, so be."

"Stop braggin', heathen!" the scout exclaimed. "We all know that you're mighty smart, but as I've told you about four hundred times, there ain't no use in you keepin' sayin' it every now an' then. Jest 'cause you're a sleight-of-hand feller an' kin beat any card sharp what's livin' playin' draw

poker, an' kin git off more funny pieces of business than fourteen men all told, don't mean that you have got to keep braggin' about it all the time."

"Allee light, Misler Charlie, me no say something more, so be. You velly smartee Melican man. Maybe you wantee chuckee dicee for fivee dollee."

"Huh! As if I'd chuck dice for money with you, heathen! It didn't take me more than two weeks to find out that you was the biggest skin what ever lived. Cleaned me out of quite a little bit of money, I'll admit. But that's all right, heathen. I reckon I've got square with you for all you have done to me."

Hop laughed lightly at this, showing that he might have agreed with what the scout said, or possibly not.

Anyhow, it was safe to say that any one who could get the best of that particular heathen must be what is called a "good one."

Having finished all the work he had to do just then, Hop lighted a big black cigar and walked leisurely up the ascent to the trail.

Then he sat down on a rock and proceeded to smoke, looking down upon those at the camp with a lordly sort of air.

This exasperated Cheyenne Charlie somewhat.

"What's he tryin' to do, anyhow, Wild?" he said, turning to the young deadshot.

"It would look to me as if he was trying to get you to say something, Charlie," was the smiling reply.

"Well, if he is I reckon I'll have to say it."

Then raising his voice, the scout called out:

"Say, you heathen fool, you ain't thinkin' that you're the emperor of China, or somethin' like that, are you?"

"No, Misler Charlie. Me takee thlins easy, so be. You comee uppee here and me givee you velly nicee cigar."

"Huh! I don't want none of your cigars, heathen. Most of 'em has got powder in 'em, or some other kind of stuff that will explode an' putty nigh blow a feller's eyes out. Don't think you kin ketch me that way. But I reckon I'll come up there, anyhow."

As the scout started to go up the little hill the sounds made by an approaching vehicle of some sort came faintly to his ears.

Hop heard it, too, and so did most of those at the camp.

"Hip hi!" Hop called out. "Um stage allee samee comee, Misler Wild."

"That's all right, Hop," was the reply. "Such a thing is to be expected. The trail looks very much as if a stage and other wagons go over it quite often."

Charlie hastened up and quickly joined the Chinaman, and just as he got there he saw a cloud of dust down the trail in the direction they had come.

Then he was not long in distinguishing an old-fashioned stage-coach that was drawn by four horses.

"Great gimlets!" he exclaimed. "They're comin' as if they was in a blamed hurry."

This was indeed true, for the horses were at a mad gallop, and through the dust Hop and the scout could see the driver swinging his whip furiously.

But they soon understood why the driver was hurrying the horses.

Two shots rang out from somewhere behind the stage, and then a volley was fired further up.

"Hey!" Cheyenne Charlie called out, excitedly. "Come up here, Wild. I reckon road agents is after the blamed old stage."

But Young Wild West had already seized his rifle, and he came running up the slope quickly enough.

Jim Dart was right behind him, rifle in hand, and then Arietta bound to take a hand in the game, grabbed her rifle and followed, leaving Anna and Eloise with the cook.

With a clatter and bang the stage-coach bounced along over the trail, which happened to be quite rough at that point.

Just as Young Wild West appeared the driver saw him as well as Hop and the scout.

"Hooray!" he yelled.

Then more shots were fired.

On dashed the four horses right past where our friends were standing.

Charlie and Hop were on one side of the trail, while Wild and Jim, with Arietta, were on the other.

"Whoa!" the driver called out, as he got about twenty feet past them.

But the young deadshot and his companions were not paying any attention to the stage-coach just then.

They saw a number of horsemen coming swiftly down the trail, all of them wearing masks over their faces.

Instantly the young deadshot's rifle flew to his shoulder, and in a ringing voice he called out:

"Halt!"

Crack, crack!

Two revolver shots were fired, and the bullets went over the boy's head.

But the masked horsemen slackened the pace of their steeds greatly, coming right on.

Crang!

This time one of them discharged a rifle, and the bullet narrowly missed hitting Jim Dart, flattening against a rock ten feet away.

That was all Young Wild West could stand.

Taking a quick aim at the man in the lead, he pulled the trigger of his rifle.

Crang!

As the report rang out the fellow threw up his arms and fell to the ground, his horse turning sharply to the right and galloping away in fright.

As quickly as they could do it the rest of the gang, which numbered probably eight or nine, swung their horses around and darted into some bushes that happened to be at the side of the trail.

"Hooray, hooray!" came from the driver and the passengers who were in the stage-coach. "I reckon the Mountain Outlaws got the worst of it this time."

CHAPTER II.

JOHN W. PUTNAM, U. S. MARSHAL.

Young Wild West knew there was no chance of overtaking the fleeing horsemen, for they were bound to get away and make good their escape, or if they chose to do so, hide behind the rocks.

But he hastened toward the spot where the man he had shot was lying.

The boy knew the fellow was not dead, for he had seen him move.

The fact was he had not tried to kill him, and had simply shot at his right arm.

Cheyenne Charlie started after the young deadshot, while Jim turned his attention to the driver and passengers of the stage-coach.

When Wild was yet fifty feet from him the outlaw suddenly sprang to his feet and darted among some rocks at the side of the trail.

"Hold on, there!" the young deadshot called out. "Stop right where you are, or I'll finish you."

A derisive laugh sounded, and then they heard the sounds made by receding footfalls.

By the time they got to the rocks where the fellow had disappeared there was nothing to be seen of him.

"No need of going any further, Charlie," Wild said, in his cool and easy way. "They might be waiting for us. We'll just go on back and talk to the driver and passengers. Possibly we might get a little information from them."

"It ain't much that they kin tell us, Wild, any more than what we've seen, I reckon," was the reply, with a shrug of the shoulders. "But come on. This here is what I call putty good. We've got a job on our hands, an' it sorter looks as if we kin stay right where we're camped till we've finished it. It's a putty sure thing that this is the gang the sheriff is offerin' a reward for."

"I haven't the least doubt but that it is, Charlie."

So saying, Young Wild West turned and walked back to the halted stage-coach.

The driver and the three passengers it contained were standing upon the ground talking excitedly to Jim and Arietta, while Hop stood close by taking in everything that was being said.

"Couldn't see nothin' of 'em, eh?" the driver called out, as Wild and Charlie hastened to them.

"No, I reckon they know the lay of the land, and got away easily," the boy replied.

"Yes, I s'pose they know all about this here part of the country. A putty tough gang that is, an' you kin bet on it. Dan Hubbard has got a bunch of men with him what's outlaws for fair. There ain't one of 'em but what ain't wanted somewhere for murder an' robbery."

Jim Dart had of course questioned the driver about the attempted hold-up, and he learned that the masked riders had been seen in time to get a good start on them, and the three men who were passengers, all being brave fellows, had opened fire upon the gang with their revolvers the moment pursuit was started.

Jim had not taken the trouble to tell them who he was, even when the men declared that it was more than likely the interference had saved them, and that they felt very thankful for it.

But when Wild and Charlie came back their excitement had cooled down somewhat, and after again declaring their thanks, one of the passengers said:

"It seems a little out of place to see a gal here. Where was you when you heard the old outfit bouncin' along the trail an' the shootin' goin' on?"

"There is our camp right down there," Wild answered, as he pointed to the mouth of the ravine below them.

"Oh, I see. Thunder, boys! There's a couple of more gals, too, an' they've got a camp there."

"That is our camp, as I just said," the young deadshot retorted, smilingly. "Nothing strange about it, is there?"

"Well, I don't know," and the passenger shrugged his shoulders and looked at his companions as if he thought they might help him out.

"You fellers don't seem to know who we are," Cheyenne Charlie spoke up, as he looked proudly at the young deadshot.

"We know putty well that you ain't afraid of no gang of outlaws, even if there's a couple of boys among you," the driver answered, quickly.

"A couple of boys, eh?" and Charlie grinned broadly.

"I should reckon so."

"One of them boys you're alludin' to is the Champion Deadshot of the West, an' he ain't afraid of nothin' what ever lived. Huntin' down outlaws is jest fun for him."

"Champion Deadshot of the West, eh?" and the driver opened wide his eyes. "Well, it must be Young Wild West, then."

"That's jest who it is. Boys," and the driver turned to the passengers excitedly, "there ain't no wonder that Dan Hubbard's gang turned back. It's Young Wild West, the terror of all bad white men an' Injuns, too. Now then, I sorter reckon that the sheriff won't be long holdin' that money he's offerin' for a reward. It's dollars to doughnuts that Young Wild West an' his pards will git on the trail of the Mountain Outlaws, an' once they do it won't be long afore they'll have 'em."

There was only one of the passengers who had not heard the name of Young Wild West, and he listened to what was being said with a mild surprise.

But when the driver insisted upon shaking hands with our friends and he saw the others doing it, too, he followed suit.

"You'll excuse me," he said, as he gripped the hand of the young deadshot. "I am not altogether a stranger in these parts, though I have been living in the East for the last ten years. I was born and reared in Colorado, and I have come back to take charge of some mining property that was left to me by an uncle. It is indeed a pleasure to grip the hand of a dashing young fellow like you are. It seemed incredible to me at first that you should be such a terror to evil-doers, for if I judge rightly, you are not twenty-one yet."

"Not quite, my friend, but a few months from now I reckon I'll be able to vote, if I feel like doing so," was the laughing reply.

"Well, I suppose it isn't altogether age that counts. It's the experience. You certainly must have had plenty of that."

"I reckon so. We have been following trails ever since I was a little kid, and I learned to shoot so long ago that I can't hardly remember just how old I was."

"And you are now called the Champion Deadshot?"

"I believe there are some who call me that. But it doesn't matter much to me. I thoroughly enjoy the life I am living, and it is the same with my partners and the girls. We keep riding about the wildest parts of this country, and we are always ready to lend a helping hand to those in need, while at the same time we keep doing our best to break up such gangs as the one that just tried to hold you up."

"I see. Young Wild West, I hope we will meet again. My destination is at a mining camp which is supposed to be about eight miles to the northeast, according to what the driver told us. I believe the place is called Liberty Bend."

"Never heard of that place, my friend."

"Is that so? Well, it happens to be a brand new camp, or rather the name was given it less than three months ago. But excuse me. I haven't told you my name. I'm Donald Reeves, and I have been informed that the mining property I have fallen heir to is worth considerable. May I expect you to visit me at Liberty Bend?"

"Oh, we'll certainly get over that way after we have fixed up things with this gang of outlaws."

"But three of you would surely not undertake to capture that villainous crowd."

"I reckon there are more than three of us," the young deadshot answered, smilingly.

"But you surely don't count upon the ladies to help you."

"There is a girl there who could help about as much as any man I have ever met, and I reckon she will take part in this little game."

"Me helpee, too, so be," came from Hop, who was unable to keep from saying something. "Me velly smartee Chinees. Me ketchee outlaws velly muchee quicke."

The driver and passengers laughed at this, for there was a comical way about Hop that was irresistible.

But it is doubtful if any of them took him seriously.

"I was thinking," said Donald Reeves, after a pause, "that perhaps you would ride over to the mining camp with us and make your headquarters there. Then I am sure you could select a dozen good men to help you run down the outlaws."

"We'll try them without any help first, Mr. Reeves. Much obliged to you for the suggestion. But since we have pitched our camp we'll stay right here for a while. I rather think we'll finish this job in a day or two. Then we'll come over to your place and give you a call."

The other passengers who belonged over at Liberty Bend joined in trying to persuade the young deadshot to accompany them to the mining camp.

But the boy merely laughed, and when he had repeatedly declined, they gave it up.

"Probably you know your own business best," Reeves said, as he bade them good-by. "But it would seem to me that you are simply courting danger, for you wounded one of the villains, and if they happen to learn that your camp is here it is more than likely they will look for revenge."

"That will be all right, Mr. Reeves," the boy answered, in his cool and easy way. "If they want to look for revenge, I reckon they can do so. I rather hope they will, for we have a pretty well-protected spot down there, and there is at least one of us always on the watch. Let them come. While we don't glory in shooting even the worst kind of outlaws, I always make it a business to put up a defense, and if I find that some one is desirous of taking my life I'll cut his short as quickly as I can. You just get in the stage and go on your way. We'll take care of ourselves, and as I told you before, in a day or two we'll have Dan Hubbard and his gang dead or alive, and will go to the sheriff to claim the reward."

"A wonderful boy, I call you," Reeves declared, as he turned to get into the stage.

As the driver gathered up the reins to start off he waved his hat to our friends and said:

"I'll tell everybody over at the Bend what happened here, an' you kin bet there'll be some cheerin' done for you, Young Wild West. There's a few over there as has met you, most likely, an' when they hear that you have promised to run down Dan Hubbard an' his gang, which he calls the Mountain Outlaws, they'll all feel mighty good."

"That's all right. Good-by," and the young deadshot waved his hand as the stage rattled off.

"Goin' to do any scoutin', Wild?" Charlie asked, as he turned to the boy when the outfit had disappeared around a bend.

"Not just now, Charlie," was the reply. "We'll go down to the camp and take things easy. Of course we'll keep a watch, for I have an idea that it will not be very long before some one shows up in this vicinity. Naturally Dan Hubbard, as they call him, will be curious to learn how we happened to be here to prevent him from robbing the stage-coach."

"I see," and the scout gave a nod of satisfaction and promptly turned down the slope.

Jim and Hop followed him, but Wild and Arietta remained standing at the side of the trail for fully five minutes.

Evidently they expected to see at least one of the outlaws appear.

But nothing of the sort happened, so they went on down and then sat down close to some rocks so they might have a good view of the trail.

The smoke from the fire the cook had kindled was rising straight upward, and Wild knew that if any of the villains were on the watch they would surely see it.

This would make them come that way, of course, he thought.

But that was just what he wanted.

In such a wild place as they were now at it would be

difficult indeed to find a hiding crowd of men, who were well acquainted with the region.

The only possible way to discover their headquarters would be to follow one of them to it.

That was the very thing that was in the boy's mind at that moment, and he was waiting patiently for a spy to appear.

But the minutes flitted by, and not the least sign of any one could he see.

Charlie and Jim were keeping as strict a watch as he was, and it is safe to say that Arietta had not forgotten to be on the outlook.

As the minutes flitted by and the supper was nearly ready they were all rewarded, for the clatter of hoofs sounded in the distance, and they knew some one was riding along the trail.

In a few seconds a horseman appeared, his steed at a walk. As he came in full sight of the camp below him he brought his horse to a halt and looked down as if he was surprised.

"That's one of 'em, Wild!" Cheyenne Charlie exclaimed, in a whisper.

"I reckon so, Charlie," was the reply. "Now just take things easy. Hell come down here, of course."

The boy was right in what he said, for just then the stranger above them called out:

"Hello! You have got a camp down there, I see."

"Right you are, stranger," Wild answered, as he arose to his feet and gave a nod.

"A hunting party, I suppose."

"Yes, you might call us that."

"Come over from Liberty Bend, perhaps?" the horseman queried.

"No. We didn't know there was such a place until the stage-coach driver told us about it some little time ago."

"Is that so?"

Then the stranger turned his horse and rode slowly down the slope.

Young Wild West and his companions were looking at him sharply, and it is safe to say that they all would be able to recognize him if they ever saw him again.

He was a middle-aged man of the average size and weight, smooth-shaven and dressed in the fashion of a ranchman or cattle buyer.

The horse he rode was a buckskin broncho of the type that was common to that section.

On the whole, he did not appear to be anything above the ordinary run of men to be found in the West, and certainly there was nothing about him that suggested anything of the villain?

Without being invited to do so, he dismounted and then after looking curiously at them all, he said:

"Rather surprising to see young ladies here. After big game, I suppose."

"That's right, stranger," Wild answered, in his cool and easy way. "Just now we are after road agents. We saw the notice of a reward along the trail, and we thought we might as well camp here and make a try to get it."

"Ah! is that so?" and the vestige of a smile showed on the man's face. "So you are going to try to get Dan Hubbard, are you?"

"That's it exactly, stranger."

"All right. I am here on that same mission. I don't mind telling you that I am a special officer in disguise. Now then, it would seem to me that we might work together and if we succeed we can divide the reward. I am paid for my services, anyway, you know."

"You are a special officer, eh?"

"Yes. I'll prove that right away."

Then he took from his pocket an official-looking document which he spread out before them.

Wild saw that it was an appointment to a man bearing the name of John W. Putnam as United States Marshal.

"Satisfied?" the stranger asked, smilingly, as the boy handed him back the paper.

"Oh, yes, Mr. Putnam," was the quick reply.

"Very well, then. I am going to ask a favor of you."

"What do you want, Mr. Putnam?"

I would like to remain at your camp over night. I am willing to pay you for the trouble I'll put you to. The fact is I have every reason to believe that the haunt of this outlaw gang is located within a mile of this very spot. Having nothing in the way of a camping outfit with me, I would be severely handicapped if I were compelled to put up alone all night."

"All right, Mr. Putnam. I reckon you can stay here." The boy made the answer without so much as looking at his companions.

CHAPTER III.

DAN HUBBARD.

Even though the stranger had shown what might be called his credentials, Young Wild West was not willing to believe that he was exactly what he represented himself to be.

However, he had readily given his consent that John W. Putnam should remain at the camp with them over night.

Putnam certainly was gentlemanly in his ways, and not one bit forward when it came to conversing with the girls.

"I have been back and forth over this trail at least five times during the past two weeks," he told them, "but never have I been fortunate enough to meet the outlaws. From what I have been told they have frequently held up the stage-coach which passes every other day along the trail. But even though I have searched about at and around the very spots the hold-ups have been made, I have never been able to find a trace of the miscreants. Rather disheartening, you will say, but when you come to think that I am a paid man of the United States Government, and that there is a substantial reward in view, it isn't likely that I am apt to grow tired of the search very soon."

"I should say not, Mr. Putnam," Wild answered, in his cool and easy way. "Now then, you might as well unsaddle your horse and tie him along the brook."

"Thank you. I'll do that. As I told you a little while ago, I'll pay you for all the trouble I put you to."

"Hop, just take care of this man's horse," Wild said, turning to the clever Chinese.

"Allee light, Misler Wild," and the Chinaman promptly stepped forward and took the animal by the bridle.

The marshal declared that he was quite able to do it himself, but Hop would not let him.

"Lat allee light, my Melican friend," he said, smiling blandly. "Me fixee allee light."

As the Chinaman started off with the horse after he had tied a lariat about its neck and removed the saddle and bridle, Wild walked leisurely toward the brook, leaving Charlie and Jim talking with Putnam.

"Hop," the young deadshot whispered, as he caught up with the heathen, "just tie that horse somewhere between the others. There is quite an open spot almost in the middle. Tie him there."

"Allee light, Misler Wild. Me undelstandee. Me velly smartee Chinese," was the reply, and then Hop struck up whistling a fantastic sort of air which might have been composed by some great Chinese musician, or possibly it had never been composed at all.

Anyhow, he took good care to tie the stranger's horse just about where the young deadshot had advised him to.

The saddle and bridle were lying upon the ground, and when he came back the Chinaman picked them up and quickly deposited them near those that belonged to our friends.

"Now len, Misler Melican man," he said, "eveiything allee light. If you wantee washee in um blook you do lat. Pletty soonee um suppee be leddy. My fool blother allee samee cookee velly muchee quickee."

"That heathen is somewhat amusing," the marshal said, turning to the young deadshot as he walked leisurely back from the brook.

"That's right. He's our clever Chinee, you know."

"Clever, eh? Well, I've seen a great many of them who are remarkably clever, and tricky as well."

"This fellow is tricky, too, Mr. Putnam, but not in the way you would put it, I suppose. The fact is he is a very clever sleight-of-hand performer—a magician, I should say. Then again, he is full of fun, and is capable of affording a whole lot of entertainment at times."

"Is that so? Well, I can see plainly then that it will not be a dull evening."

Evidently Putnam thought Hop's suggestion a good one, for he now excused himself and went down to the brook, where he quickly began making use of the water both upon his face and hands.

As he arose to his feet after the operation he found the clever Chinese standing with a towel in his hand.

"Thank you," Putnam said, as he took it from him.

Then after drying himself he drew from his pocket a silver quarter and passed it to the heathen.

"Allee samee tippee, so be," Hop said.

"Yes," was the laughing reply. "I imagine you were expecting it."

"Me likee tippee, so be."

As he said this Hop slyly exchanged the silver quarter for another coin which he had in the other hand.

It looked exactly like the one the man had given him, but instead it was a very poor counterfeit.

"You givee me um quarter, so be," Hop said, as Putnam turned to walk over to where the young deadshot was now sitting with his partners and the girls.

"Yes. Isn't it enough?" came the reply.

"Velly bad quarter, so be."

Then Hop put the coin in his mouth and bit into it, doubling it almost half over.

"A bad one, eh?" Putnam exclaimed, greatly surprised. "Why, I didn't know that. I'm sure, my heathen friend, that I wasn't trying to deceive you by giving you spurious money. Here. I'll exchange it for you."

"You makee lillee mistakee, so be," was the grinning reply, and then Hop handed him the counterfeit coin.

Putnam took it for granted that he had really given it to the Chinaman, so he quickly found another and after making sure that it was all right, he tossed it to Hop.

"You can have this, too, though I suppose it is no good to you," he said, as he threw the other to him.

Hop caught it deftly with his left hand, bowing his thanks as he did so.

Charlie, who seemed to think that the heathen had deceived the man, walked quietly over to Hop and said:

"That wasn't no counterfeit what he give you, was it?"

"No, Mister Charlie. Me allee samee foolee him."

"You're a great heathen, you are. What did you do that for?"

"Me wantee havee lillee fun, so be."

Charlie laughed aloud, for whenever Hop got the best of any one he always regarded it as being funny.

The sun had disappeared below a distant range by this time, though it was hardly growing dark yet.

But it was time for the evening meal, anyhow, and Wing had arranged things so it would be ready just about that time.

When he announced it there was not one there who was not actually hungry, the guest included.

The scout's wife had spread a cloth on a big flat rock which was just about high enough for them all to stand and eat with something like convenience.

Generally they sat upon the ground when taking their meals, but this happened to give them a change.

The marshal hung his hat upon a projecting point of rock, and walked up to the spot Wild allotted to him.

Then as quickly as the food was brought to them all hands began to eat.

"Eatin' when you're standin' up gives you a chance to swallow a little more, I reckon," Cheyenne Charlie observed. "This is the first time I've done it this way in a week. But I sorter like it. You kin git a big mouthful of grub an' then walk around a little as you're chewin'."

"I suppose you have to get used to all ways of eating while you're in camp," the marshal answered, with a smile.

"I reckon so, Mr. Putnam," Wild said, in his cool and easy way. "We eat a great many more meals in camp than we do inside a house. The fact is we prefer this way of living."

"Which sounds rather strange, though of course I believe you mean what you say."

The conversation kept right up during the whole time they were eating the supper.

When it was finally over with Putnam drew a pipe and tobacco from his pocket and proceeded to have a smoke.

Charlie followed his example, and then Hop Wah was not long in producing a big black cigar, which he lighted and then sat down near the two.

While Wild and Jim smoked occasionally, it had not become a habit with them, so they did not join in just then.

It was now beginning to grow dark, but Wing had thrown some fresh fuel upon the campfire, and as the air became rather chilly after the sun had gone down, the warmth that came from it was rather agreeable.

All this time the young deadshot and his partners had been keeping a watch toward the trail.

So far Wild had not made a single comment regarding the stranger, but he felt pretty sure that both Charlie and Jim suspected him as being one of the outlaws, even though he had shown a government certificate declaring him to be a marshal.

One thing about Putnam was that he was not at all inquisitive.

He had not even asked them how it happened they came to be in that part of the country, or where they had been bound before they decided to hunt down the outlaw band.

Wild had been waiting for him to start upon this subject, but finding that he was not likely to do it very soon, he now decided it time to talk a little upon that point himself.

"Mr. Putnam," he said, as he came over and sat down near the man, "I believe you said you had been riding back and forth over the trail for about two weeks, all the while searching for the outlaw band."

"Yes, I said that, and it is the truth. But you certainly haven't been here very long."

"No, we only came here this afternoon. We were not aware of the fact that there was a mining camp so close by until after we pitched our camp here. Then a little excitement occurred on the trail right above us. The stage-coach came along at a red-hot pace, and after it were eight or nine masked men."

"Is that so?" and Putnam appeared to be surprised and excited.

"Yes. They were giving the old outfit a hot chase, but we happened to be here and stopped them. I shot one of the sneaking coyotes in the arm, but he got away just the same."

"And you saved the passengers of the stage from being robbed, then?"

"I reckon so. The masked rascals were glad enough to get away after I fired the shot that winged one of them."

"Just my luck," and the marshal appeared to be disgusted. "I would have been mighty glad to be here about that time. Surely I would have followed them up."

"We had no chance to follow them, since we were all on the trail up there while our horses were tied down here."

"You didn't even try to follow them, then?"

"No, no further than the side of the trail to the rocks behind which the wounded man disappeared. He was on foot, and we might have possibly overtaken him if we had wished to run the risk. But we have all had quite some dealings with men of this type, and we know that it is dangerous to look for them when there are plenty of rocks and bushes about. An ambush is a common thing, Mr. Putnam."

"Yes, you were wise in not following them, I suppose. But it seems to me I certainly would have gone on in the direction they took when they fled from the trail. As I told you before, I feel sure that the hiding-place of the outlaws is no great distance from this very spot. If I knew the exact place the wounded man disappeared I would feel tempted to proceed along in that direction, even though it is now quite dark."

"If you feel that way about it I'll take you up there and show you exactly where it was that we last saw the fellow. I am satisfied there is some sort of a path running in among the rocks. But I don't feel like taking the risk, as I just said."

"I certainly would like to go up there with you."

"All right, come right along, then."

Putnam looked at the revolver he carried, and satisfying himself that it was all right, he arose and showed his willingness to go with the young deadshot.

Wild shot a glance at Charlie and Jim which meant for them to remain right where they were and keep their ears open.

Then he walked leisurely up the slope with the marshal, and reaching the trail proceeded straight to the pile of rocks behind which the wounded outlaw had disappeared that afternoon after the attempted hold-up.

"Here you are, marshal," the young deadshot said, speaking in a low voice, as he paused near the rocks. "If I am not mistaken, the fellow ran right behind here."

"Ah!" Putnam exclaimed, as he knelt close to the ground and peered behind the rocks. "As dark as it is, I can see there is a sort of path here. I wouldn't be surprised if this led direct to the haunt of the outlaws. I am going to take the risk of going a short distance, Young Wild West. Do you wish to accompany me, or will you remain here?"

"There is really no need of me doing either, marshal. I have no intention of pursuing the search for the band of outlaws to-night. I intend to start in the first thing in the morning. If you want to do a little scouting around here I advise you not to go very far, so you will be in danger of getting lost. I'll go back to the camp."

"Oh, just as you please. But I am so eager to catch these villains that I can't resist the temptation. I am going to run

the risk of following this path, for I know it is a path. But I will be careful not to get lost."

"All right, marshal. If anything happens to you just fire a shot, and we'll come mighty quickly to your assistance."

Then the young deadshot turned and walked along the trail.

Putnam watched him until he saw that he was going on down to the camp, and then he slipped quickly among the rocks and proceeded over the path, for certainly it was a path, exclaiming in a low tone of voice as he did so:

"Good! I have had a good supper, and now I'll go back and let the boys know of my success. I'll fix it so that they can come in the dead of the night, and we'll make short work of Young Wild West and his partners, and the golden-haired girl will be my prize. Ha, ha, ha! How easy it was to deceive them. They say Young Wild West is as smart as a steel trap, but it takes Dan Hubbard to outwit him."

CHAPTER IV.

OUTWITTING THE OUTLAW.

Young Wild West had no intention of going back to the camp when he parted company with the man who represented himself to be John W. Putnam, a United States marshal.

On the other hand, he had made up his mind the moment the alleged marshal spoke of leaving the camp to search for the hiding-place of the outlaws that he would follow him.

Even though it was now quite dark, Wild made sure to locate the spot where the path had been discovered behind the rocks.

He waited for about two minutes, and then noiselessly he made his way back to the spot.

"It's a path all right," he muttered, under his breath, as he stepped slowly along, being careful to feel his way lest he might stumble over something and cause a sound that would be heard by the man who had gone ahead of him.

Bound to track the villain in the darkness, the young deadshot had no difficulty at all in proceeding, and the further he went the more of a path it seemed to be that he was treading.

He continued on without making the least sound until he had covered a distance of possibly a hundred yards.

Then just as he paused to listen a flash of light showed to the left of him.

The boy knew right away what it was.

Somebody had struck a match.

The light lingered a few seconds and then went out, so it was natural to think that a pipe or possibly a cigarette or cigar had been lighted.

But it mattered little to Young Wild West which of these it was.

He knew there was somebody close by, and that was enough to make him proceed toward the spot without delay.

The path wound its way among the rocks, and in one place there were overhanging bushes that bent so low that the boy was forced to duck his head in order to get through.

But it was easy, for all that, and after getting through the bushes he found himself within a few feet of a rough-faced cliff which ran upward perpendicularly.

He did not go any further then, but crouching close to a rock endeavored to pierce the darkness, while at the same time he was on the alert for the least sound.

In less than ten seconds he heard a step, and then he was able to distinguish the outlines of a man as he appeared from a very black spot which no doubt might be the mouth of a cave as the boy instantly thought.

The form was followed by another, and then Wild saw that some one was smoking.

"So it was dead easy, eh, Dan?" came from the man who was smoking in a very low tone of voice.

"Very easy indeed," was the reply. "It struck me that it would be a good idea to come over and let you know how I made out."

Wild knew it was the man who had introduced himself as the United States marshal who said this, and he congratulated himself on having so easily discovered the hiding-place of the outlaws.

Another question was asked of the man he saw smoking, and then Dan Hubbard, for it was the leader of the outlaw gang who had failed to deceive the young deadshot and his friends, proceeded to relate how he had gone direct to the camp in the low spot the other side of the trail, and what happened after he arrived.

"That's great, Dan!" the listener declared. "Now then, what are you going to do?"

"What am I going to do? Why, there's just the nicest bit

of a girl down in that camp you ever saw. I fell in love with her at first sight, though of course I didn't let it be known. She is Young Wild West's sweetheart, too, and I believe her name is Arietta. Quite a fancy name, too, Dick."

"Yes, but I've heard of that gal. She's s'posed to be about as good a shot as most men are, an' she ain't afraid of nothin', they say."

"Probably not. I hope she isn't afraid of me, for I intend to make her my bride, and that within a few short days, too. The fact is, Dick, I have decided to have you come and raid the camp some time after midnight. That will be the proper time, I think, for even though some one is on guard, you can creep up to within striking distance, and then I'll attend to the guard. You have heard more of the doings of Young Wild West and his partners than I have, but I know enough of them to make me feel sure that the quicker they are put out of the world the better it will be for all such people as we are. Of course you know that means that they have got to be shot, and it must be done before they have a chance to shoot any of us. No doubt they have a good supply of money with them. But whether they have or not, I am sure there are enough provisions and other things that would come in handy for us in that camp to make things a great deal more comfortable than we now have them in the cave. There's another girl there who might strike the fancy of you or one of the others of our gang. Then there is a married woman, too. She is the wife of the fellow they call Cheyenne Charlie. I hardly think it would be advisable to let any of them escape. 'Dead men tell no tales,' is an old-time saying, and there never was a more true one. It would apply the same to dead women or girls, but of course it isn't necessary for us to put the three females out of existence. The two heathens amount to nothing, and they can be shot down while the young deadshot, as they call him, and his partners are getting their medicine. It's a mighty desperate undertaking, Dick, but I have weighed it thoroughly in my mind, and I am convinced that it is about the only course we can pursue, for by doing as I have planned, we will not only be ridding the world of the troublesome Young Wild West and his partners, but I'll be gaining a bride, something that I have often thought would be the best thing that could happen to me."

"All right, Dan. You know very well that there ain't none of us as would go ag'in anything you said. You have been leadin' us long enough to show that you know jest what to do. We've been pilin' up a little wealth right along, an' I s'pose if things got too hot for us after this here piece of business is done we could move away to some other parts, as you have often said we would have to do, maybe."

"That's it exactly, Dick. When the raid is made to-night we want to see to it that everything is taken away from that camp, so in case any one comes over from the mining camp to look for Young Wild West and his friends they will be made to think that they have taken their departure. That will be an end of the whole thing, for it would hardly be suspected that the Mountain Outlaws had cleaned up Young Wild West and the rest of them."

It can well be imagined what Young Wild West was thinking of as he listened to all this.

But it was not the first time he had ever heard his enemies plotting against him, and even though it might have angered him, there was an exultant feeling within him at that moment, and he could scarcely keep from laughing aloud.

"Well, Dick, there is no necessity of me going into the cave. I've told you about all there is to tell. Now then, you can go back and let the boys know what's up. Be sure and fetch all but Sanders with you. He has a wounded arm, and of course will not feel like doing much. He can remain at the cave until we all come back with our fair prisoners."

"All right, Dan. What time shall we leave here?"

"Leave here just about one o'clock. I'll be awake and waiting for you. When you creep up close to the camp give an imitation of the hoot of an owl. You can do that nicely, as I know. I'll be awake and I'll slip out of the tent and tackle whoever it is on guard without delay. I'll make quick work of him, too; you can believe that, Dick."

"All right, Dan, I reckon I understand everything what's to be done. We leave here jest one o'clock."

"That's it exactly. Now then, I'll go on back and report that I have been unable to find a trace of the outlaws. Ha, ha, ha!"

Wild knew it was time for him to leave, so he quietly slipped back, and creeping under the overhanging bushes, tread noiselessly along the path, taking care to keep going at a fast walk, lest the villain might overtake him.

Once he reached the trail the young deadshot started on a run, and down the slope he went.

Charlie and Jim heard him coming, and he was instantly challenged.

"It's me, boys," the young deadshot answered, as he threw up his hand. "No noise."

Then there came a silence, and the next moment the young deadshot was in the camp.

Then he hurriedly told them how he had followed the bogus marshal to the retreat of the outlaws, and that the villain was coming back.

"Don't any of you say a thing that would let him know that I just arrived. I want him to think that I came directly here when I parted company with him," the young deadshot observed, as he sat down close to his sweetheart, who was eager to learn all about it.

While he kept an eye toward the trail above Wild talked rapidly in a low tone of voice, and quickly gave them to understand that it was planned that the camp should be attacked at one o'clock that night, and that their guest intended to slay whoever it was who might be doing guard duty at the time.

"The scoundrel!" Arietta exclaimed. "I never have believed in a lynching, but it seems to me that it would be right and proper for us to hang him."

"An' then riddle his carcass with bullets," Cheyenne Charlie answered, in a voice that sounded like a growl, for he was plainly much worked up over what he had heard.

Just then they heard footsteps, and they knew the outlaw leader was returning.

"Hello, there!" Wild called out, as he arose to his feet.

"It's me, Young Wild West—the United States marshal," came the reply through the darkness.

"Oh, all right, Mr. Putnam. Glad you have come back."

"I very nearly got lost among the rocks and bushes," the villain said, as he hurried to the camp. "Didn't meet with any luck at all. I think you are right in saying that you are going to wait until to-morrow morning before you pursue the search for the outlaws."

"That's the way I look at it, Mr. Putnam," Wild answered, in his cool and easy way, as the man stepped into the light. "You can bet that if you work in conjunction with us you will have the satisfaction of getting the men you are after, and I am pretty sure it will be done before sunset to-morrow, too."

"I sincerely hope so," lied the scoundrel, no doubt laughing inwardly as he said it.

Cheyenne Charlie managed to curb his feelings, and when the rascally impostor began relating some of his alleged experiences in hunting down criminals in various parts of the West he listened apparently much interested.

Certainly Dan Hubbard, the outlaw, was a good conversationalist, and the things he told were mostly quite plausible, though he had a way of making himself a genuine hero in every exploit he mentioned.

Every one in the camp knew of the plot even to the sleepy Wing Wah.

But he had so much confidence in Young Wild West and his partners that it is doubtful if he was the least worried about it.

Hop was more pleased than worried, for he had a way of anticipating things that were likely to happen, and he was eager for the moment to arrive when the guest of the camp would discover the awful mistake he had made in thinking that he could outwit Young Wild West.

In order to lead the outlaw along nicely, Wild related a few of his experiences, most of them being how he had succeeded in breaking up notorious gangs of outlaws and road agents.

"I honestly believe," he said, as it was drawing near the time to retire for the night, "that I could hardly make a mistake when I once started to do a thing of this kind. Mr. Putnam, I would wager all I am worth that I'll have Dan Hubbard a prisoner before sunset to-morrow, and that the members of his gang will either be dead or prisoners also."

"That would be a rather rash wager, Young Wild West," the villain retorted, with a shake of the head. "By the way you talk it would seem that you already have a clow as to the whereabouts of this particular gang."

"I don't know why you should think that. I certainly haven't been looking for them. I mean to wait until to-morrow morning before I find their hiding-place."

"Well, then, it strikes me that you have more confidence than any one I ever met."

"Confidence is a good thing to have, Young Wild West."

"Yes, but it don't always help a person much in an undertaking."

"Not always. But I'm sure it will this time. Now then, as I intend to rise pretty early in the morning, I think it will be advisable to turn in for the night. You of course will sleep in the tent with us."

"You surely are going to post a guard?" the villain asked, as he looked sharply at the young deadshot.

"Oh, yes. We never omit that, even if we are in camp right in the heart of a settlement or mining camp. Jim always takes first trick. Charlie relieves him, and then I relieve Charlie and wait until daylight, when everybody gets up to begin another day."

"Nothing like having a system. It shows plainly that you know exactly what you are about. Well," and he gave a yawn, "I am a little sleepy, so since you have suggested it I think I'll go in the tent and lie down."

"All right. I'll go out and look at the horses, as I generally do. I think so much of that sorrel stallion of mine, you know, that I always want to see to it that he has all that is needed."

The girls at once sought the tent that was used as a sleeping quarters by them, and then Charlie led the way into the other tent, while Wild started in the direction of the horses, followed by Jim.

Hop Wah waited until the guest had entered, and then he followed him into the tent.

When they were a safe distance away the young deadshot told Jim more definitely of the conversation he had heard after following the outlaw leader to his haunt.

"Charlie will be on guard when the time comes," the young deadshot said, "so when you come to the tent you want to be sure that you don't fall asleep. We must both be awake, and just before the time comes for the villains to appear we'll take care of Dan Hubbard."

"I understand, Wild," was the reply. "Do you intend to open fire on the gang?"

"I certainly do, Jim. They are surely deserving of it. We'll just make Hubbard a prisoner, and then when the signal is given outside we'll force him to shout for his men to come on. The moment they appear we'll open fire on them."

"All right. That settles it."

The young deadshot then walked softly back to the camp, and pausing close to the tent that was occupied by the girls, he called Arietta, and in a few whispered words told her that none of them need fear, and that they could go to sleep as usual since everything had been planned to take care of the villains when they came to make the attack.

Then the boy walked around to the other tent, and entering it, pulled off his outer clothing as usual and dropped upon his blanket.

So cool and collected was he that Wild was not long in dropping asleep.

The minutes flitted by, and two hours passed.

Then it was not long before Jim came to arouse the scout.

Knowing that most likely the outlaw was awake, neither of the three said anything that could possibly make him at all suspicious.

The change was duly made, and Jim dropped down by the side of the young deadshot.

Half an hour later Wild arose, and striking a match looked at his watch.

"Twenty minutes to one," he said, aloud. "I can't seem to sleep very well. Are you awake, Jim?"

"Yes," came the quick reply.

"How about you, Mr. Putnam?"

There was no reply, and then came an affected snoring.

Wild held the match over so he could look at the man's face.

Then nodding to Jim, he said:

"Just take care of him."

The moment the words came from the boy's lips Jim pounced upon the villain who was feigning sleep, clutching him by the throat with one hand and clapping the other over his mouth so he could not make an outcry.

Wild quickly lent his assistance, and before Dan Hubbard could realize what had happened he was bound hand and foot.

The cold muzzle of a revolver pressed against his forehead, and when the thing had been accomplished to his full satisfaction, Young Wild West said:

"Now then, Dan Hubbard, I reckon you know that you made a mistake in thinking that you could deceive me. Your gang will be here in a very few minutes now, and that probably means the last of them, for we intend to shoot them down

like dogs. I'll take you to the sheriff to-morrow, or as soon as I can get you there, and claim the reward. How do you feel about it?"

"Outwitted, by jingo!" came from the man. "You're a human fiend, Young Wild West."

"All right," was the cool and easy reply. "You just be quiet now. The moment the hoot of an owl sounds I am going to tell you what to say, and if you don't do it I'll blow the top of your head off."

CHAPTER V.

THE CLEVER MOVE OF DICK, THE OUTLAW.

The outlaw called Dick who had taken orders from Dan Hubbard while Young Wild West was listening near the mouth of the cave was really what might be termed the lieutenant of the band.

Hubbard relied greatly upon him, since he well knew that he could be depended upon to do exactly as he was told, and also that he was resourceful and able to give orders at a time when most needed.

The fellow waited until his superior had started from the spot, and then he stepped back into the mouth of a cave and soon joined the rest of the band.

It was one of the many caves to be found in that part of the country, and did not seem to be so very well hidden, which made it appear strange that the villains had not been tracked to their lair before.

Hubbard had discovered the place right after he first came to begin operations along the trail in the business of a road agent.

His skillful tactics enabled him to throw all pursuers off his track, and hence he had begun to regard himself as immune from the sheriff and others who were so anxious to take him dead or alive.

Dick, as he was called, for not one of his companions knew of any other name he possessed, soon joined the six men who had remained in the cave when he answered the whistle which they knew to be a signal from the leader.

"Well, boys," he said, after he came back, "we've got something a little different to 'tend to to-night."

"What is it?" asked Sanders, the man Wild had shot in the arm that afternoon. "Any chance to git square with the feller what plugged me with a bullet?"

"I reckon there is. You know it was Young Wild West who shot you, don't you?"

"Yes, that's what you said."

"I know it was. I happened to be lookin' when he fired the shot, an' I seen you tumble from your horse. But it's all right, Sanders. Dan has got things fixed up fine. He went to their camp an' fooled 'em well enough to git 'em to take him in for the night. He told 'em he was John W. Putnam, a United States marshal. You know how Dan got that document from the feller what was lookin' for us a couple of weeks ago."

"Yes, I know that all right. The marshal by the name of Putnam got shot full of holes, too, which put an end to him for good."

"Of course he did, an' served him right, too, for comin' to interfere with our business. Well, Dan jest thought he would make out he was Putnam. That document was enough to prove it, an' it worked fine. Why, he even got Young Wild West an' his pards to agree to help him out an' divide the reward between 'em. But the best of all of it was he left 'em at the camp an' made out he was comin' to look around a bit to see if he couldn't find where the gang was located. That was how he come back here to let us know what was goin' on. We're all to leave the cave here at one o'clock to-night with the exception of you, Sanders. Dan allows that you havin' a wounded arm you couldn't do much, so you're to stay an' take care of the cave."

"Take care of it!" Sanders exclaimed, disgustedly. "What's there to take care of here, I'd like to know? Nobody is apt to come around spyin' on us."

"That ain't it. He says you have got to stay here, so I s'pose that settles it."

"All right, I'll stay, 'cause it ain't likely I could do much, anyhow."

Then Dick related in detail what they were expected to do, and what the reward would be.

When he spoke about the girls they were all eager to finish the job, as they called it.

They even got arguing as to who should fall in to become husbands of the two extra folks, as they called them.

But Dick, who did not seem to take a great deal of stock in that part of the game, merely laughed.

"It's the share of the money that I'm lookin' for," he declared. "Dan allows that they must have quite a little with 'em. But even if they ain't they've got an outfit there that would be a whole lot good to us. Of course we won't dare to touch the horses, not in this part of the country, 'cause it's most likely that some one would recognize one or two of 'em, especially the sorrel stallion Young Wild West always rides. It's the money for the main thing, that's what I'm thinkin'."

"We've got to wait till one o'clock, eh?" one of the villains said, after a short silence.

"That's what Dan said, but I s'pose we could go out a little afore that an' sorter hang around close by."

All but Sanders thought this would be a wise thing to do, for it seemed that he did not care to remain alone at the cave.

But they easily outvoted him, and after a while all hands lay down to get a little sleep before the time came for them to leave.

It was just about half-past twelve when Dick arose and proceeded to arouse his sleeping companions.

"We may as well go out now," he said, as he looked at his watch in the light of a lantern that hung suspended from the rocky ceiling of the cave. "It ain't very far to go, so we ain't got to take no horses with us. That makes it mighty good. Now then, I want you all to understand that Dan's orders is that everything must be took away from that camp. After we shoot 'em the bodies has got to be hid somewhere, 'cause he wants to make it look as if Young Wild West an' his crowd struck out of their own accord to some other place. Come on, boys. Hurry a little. It will take us five or ten minutes afore we kin git close to the camp."

A few minutes later all but the man who was designated to remain there left the cave, each carrying a carbine ready for the cruel slaughter that had been planned by their villainous leader.

It took them but a short time to reach the trail, and once there they walked noiselessly along until they came to the spot where they must turn to descend to the camp below.

There was no light there, but they could see the white tents that were pitched close to the foot of a steep bank.

The brook trickled along near them, and the water glistened in the starlight.

All was as still as the grave, with the exception of the occasional cry of some night-bird, or the howl of a catamount in the distance.

Dick cautioned the six men with him to remain at the edge of the trail, while he went down to take a look around.

He knew they would obey him, so it was not necessary to tell them twice.

Down he went without making a sound, and he actually got to within thirty feet of the two tents without being observed by Cheyenne Charlie, who was then doing guard duty.

Of course he had seen the scout before this, and he felt tempted to shoot him.

But Dick was not going to disobey the orders of his superior.

He took a great deal of stock in Dan Hubbard, and liked him as if he had been a brother.

The man remained there watching and listening until he felt that it was time for him to go back and get his men ready for the attack.

Just as he was about to leave he heard the sounds of a disturbance in the smaller of the two tents.

Startled, he crouched close to the ground and listened.

When he suddenly saw Cheyenne Charlie walk up to the tent as if elated he made up his mind that something was wrong.

Then he listened and heard the sounds of a struggle inside.

This was followed by the unmistakable words of some one indicating that Dan Hubbard had been seized and made a prisoner.

The spying outlaw was dismayed, and at first he knew not what he should do.

But when he heard his leader exclaim "Outwitted, by Jingo!" he knew for a fact that the scheme had failed to work.

What Young Wild West said immediately after that came plainly to his ears, and though he was puzzled as to how the boy had learned that the hoot of an owl was to be given as a signal, he resolved to act without delay.

"This is the worst I ever heard tell of," was his mental

exclamation, and then he turned and crawled away from the spot.

Even though he was much excited and alarmed as well, he was very cautious about it, and when he finally got to the top of the little hill he was shaking and almost breathless.

"Boys," he gasped, "things has gone dead wrong. Young Wild West an' his pards has found out who Dan is, an' they've got him a prisoner in one of them tents down there. I heard somebody say to him that when the hoot of an owl sounded he would have to make an answer jest as he was told. They want to trap us, boys, but don't let 'em do it. The hoot of an owl must not be given now. But you come on. We'll git down there an' see what we kin do while they're waitin' for us."

This startling information was quite enough to temporarily unnerve the rest of the gang.

But Dick quickly recovered from the surprise he had met with, and went from one to the other, pulling upon their arms, almost fiercely declaring that they must do exactly as he said.

Then when he had them so he thought he could depend upon them all he led the way down the slope and crossing over to the foot of the bank, so they would stand less of a chance of being seen by any one on the watch, he dropped upon his hands and knees and bade them do the same.

In this way they all crawled along until they came right directly to the tent that was occupied by the girl.

Dick knew that the leader was a prisoner in the larger of the two tents, and this was enough to satisfy him that the female members of the party must be in this one.

He thought for a moment, and then a daring resolve came upon him.

The captain had set his heart upon having the golden-haired girl for his bride.

Why should he not make a bold attempt to capture her and get away?

Even if the leader's desire was never gratified they would have the girl in their power, and thus be able to dictate terms that would cause the release of Dan.

All this passed through the man's mind in much quicker time than it can be recorded.

Certainly the outlaw leader's lieutenant was resourceful and equal to an emergency.

But he did not see fit to tell his companions of his intentions.

He simply turned and motioned them to remain silent.

Then out came a keen-edged hunting-knife, and he gave a big slit in the side of the tent.

Another slit across and he had an opening more than large enough to leap through if it were necessary.

But he was not going to leap through.

He simply pushed aside the canvas and then thrust his hands through, his head following quickly.

It was dark in there, of course, and he was unable to see anything.

But he could hear human beings breathing.

But it happened that one of them was awake, and she had realized that some one was forcing an entrance to the tent.

It was Arietta.

As quick as a flash she leaped to her feet, at the same time drawing a revolver.

But quick as the girl was, the villain was ready for her.

He reached out blindly, and by good luck, or bad luck, as it might be called, succeeded in clutching the brave girl's arms.

Then with all the force he could command he pulled her through the opening in the tent.

"Wild, Wild!" Arietta cried at the top of her voice, and then she tried to turn the revolver upon her captor.

"Light out, boys!" exclaimed Dick, in a hoarse whisper, and then he aimed a quick blow and sent the revolver flying from the girl's hands.

Dick was quite a powerful man, and flinging his right arm about her, he pinned her arms to her side and then struck out as fast as he could go after his now fleeing companions.

Arietta screamed again, but a hand was clapped over her mouth, and that ended that part of it for the time being.

Dick knew Young Wild West and his partners would be after them hot, and they were, too, for he could hear them coming.

"Stop where you are!" came the command, and he knew it was the young deadshot who gave it.

"Not much I won't," he called out. "You shoot this way an' you'll kill the gal. Stand back. Boys, give it to 'em."

The men ahead responded by firing three shots, and then Dick kept on running.

As he reached the foot of the ascent one of them lent him some assistance, and in double-quick time Arietta was hustled to the trail below.

"Now then, gal," Dick said, as he let her feet drop upon the ground, but not stopping the flight very much, "you jest trot along, an' if you open your mouth an' let out another yell I'll put a bullet through your head. I don't care if you're a female or not. It's all the same to me. We've got you an' we're goin' to keep you till Young Wild West gives up Dan Hubbard."

Another man grabbed her by the left arm, and then the girl was forced to run or else be dragged.

She chose the former, and among the rocks she was forced until the path was reached.

Then Dan called another of the men to take his place, while he brought up the rear, a carbine in his hand.

"Jest let 'em come on through here!" he exclaimed, triumphantly. "It's a mighty narrow place through here, an' I reckon the stars gives enough light for me to see 'em comin'. I'll mow 'em down jest as fast as they show up."

The rest went right on with their prisoner, while Dick remained close to the trail on the watch.

But after waiting a couple of minutes and seeing no signs of pursuit, he decided that he had better go on to the cave, too.

But he moved cautiously, pausing every few feet to listen.

"I reckon they've been throwed off the track," he muttered. "Sartinly they don't know where our cave is. But most likely Young Wild West will find it after it gits daylight in the mornin', 'cause they do say that he never fails in anything he tries. But that's all right. We'll be on the watch for 'em. We've got one of them gals, though I don't know which one it is, an' that means that we kin hold her till they give up poor Dan. I wish I knowed how they found out that the hoot of an owl was to be given for a signal. Dan ain't the one as to tell sich things, even if he was theratened on bein' killed. But I s'pose after they nabbed him he up an' told about it, thinkin' it might save his life. That's only human nature, after all, an' I ain't goin' to blame him for it."

Dick had a way of settling things to his own satisfaction by merely talking them over to himself, and now he seemed to think that he had solved the problem, so there was nothing left for him to do but to go to the cave and wait there until further developments.

Certainly it would not be good policy to return to the vicinity of the camp, for it was a pretty sure thing that Young Wild West and his partners would be on the watch.

"We'll have to wait till mornin', that's all," he thought, and then after looking around to make sure that he was not followed, he entered the cave and joined the rest of the gang, who had taken helpless Arietta in ahead of him.

CHAPTER VI.

ANOTHER DISASTROUS HAPPENING.

The cry from Arietta came so unexpectedly that Young Wild West and his partners were practically dumfounded for the moment.

Both Wild and Jim were in the tent, while Charlie was kneeling right at the entrance listening to the young deadshot as he was instructing the prisoner how he must act when his gang arrived for the purpose of making an attack.

Wild was the first to act, and he almost upset the scout as he made a leap to get outside.

Revolver in hand, he sprang toward the girls' tent, and was just in time to see the dark forms of the villains as they were hurrying away.

He bounded after them, followed by his two partners, and then it was that the outlaw called Dick warned them not to shoot lest they might hit the captive girl.

This was the first knowledge they had that Arietta had been carried away.

"Great gimlets!" Cheyenne Charlie cried, as he ran back to the tent, only to meet Anna and Eloise, who were wringing their hands and were so much excited that they could hardly speak.

Both had been sound asleep when the tent was ripped open by the prowling outlaw, but they had seen Arietta as she was dragged through the opening in the canvas.

"Wild," the scout cried, excitedly, "they've got Arietta. They stole a march on us."

"That's all right," the young deadshot answered, quite coolly, for he had been quick to recover from the big surprise. "Take it easy. We'll get her away from them soon enough, and you can bet on it."

They actually saw the villains as they were hastening up the slope to the trail, but feared to open fire on them.

It was just dark enough to prevent them from seeing Arietta, and a shot meant for one of the men might easily hit her.

"Come on, Wild!" Jim Dart exclaimed. "Don't let them get too far away."

"No hurry about it, Jim," was the rather unexpected reply.

"No hurry!"

"No. You have forgotten that I know just where the outlaws cave is."

"Oh, that's so, Wild," and Jim showed that he felt much relieved.

"If we run on pell-mell after them they will have all the chance in the world to drop us before we can see them. They can hide behind the rocks and bushes, you know," the young deadshot went on to say. "It is rather tough, I know, but Arietta must be taken to the cave, that's sure. We can only hope that they will treat her well while she is there. It would never do for us to run right after them now, for I know just what sort of a place we must go through before we get to the headquarters of the gang."

Then the boy turned and walked back to the camp.

It was still dark there, so he called out sharply:

"Hop!"

"Me light here, Misler Wild," came the reply, as the clever Chinese showed himself.

"Light a lantern."

"Allee light," and the next minute the command was obeyed.

"Girls," the young deadshot said, turning to Anna and Eloise, who were still very much frightened, "there is no need of worrying any. This is not the first time Arietta has been spirited away so unexpectedly. I can't quite understand how it all happened, for I heard the scoundrel we have a prisoner instruct one of his men just what to do. The hoot of an owl was to be given as a signal before they made the attack. But," and he shook his head in a puzzled way, "I am quite certain that no such signal was given. Instead the gang crept up and succeeded in kidnaping Arietta. A clever coup, you might call it."

"Ha, ha, ha!" came from inside the larger of the two tents, and Wild knew Dan Hubbard was laughing at them.

"You sneaking coyote!" Wild exclaimed, as he rushed to the tent and gripped him by the ankles.

A quick pull and he had him outside in the light of the lantern which Hop was holding.

"You think it's funny, do you?" the boy exclaimed, as he pointed his gun directly at the man's face.

"It strikes me that it's a little funny, Young Wild West," came the cool retort. "It only proves that I have men under me who are able to act no matter what the conditions may be. The plan was changed, it seems, but not by me. My clever lieutenant is responsible for that, and I give him credit for it."

"Dan Hubbard," the boy said, as he reached over and lifted him to a sitting posture, "I am going to tell you how we came to know that the attack was intended to be made. When you turned down the path among the rocks after you thought I'd started back for the camp I wasn't long in getting after you. I heard all you said to your lieutenant, as you call him. His name is Dick, I believe."

"I thought that must be the way of it," came the reply, just as if the prisoner was not at all alarmed at the position he was placed in.

"You thought just right, then. Now then, it seems that your men didn't obey you altogether."

"And I am very glad of it, for they have one of your girls a prisoner. That makes me feel good, and you should know why, Young Wild West."

"I suppose you think that as long as they have her a prisoner you will be safe from harm."

"That's it exactly."

"Well, banish such thoughts from your mind, then. I just told you that I followed you to your cave, didn't I?"

Dan Hubbard made no reply to this.

"It means," the boy went on, in his cool and easy way, "that I can certainly go there again. I am not going to be in any great hurry about it, for it stands to reason that your men will be watching, and I might be shot down before I had a chance to know I was in danger. No, Dan Hubbard, I am going to wait a while, and then when they think they are secure in the cave I'll appear before them unexpectedly. You see that there has really nothing been gained, after all, for just as sure as

"You're alive now the girl will be brought back here safe and sound, while you will be placed in the hands of the sheriff."

"You say it very nicely, Young Wild West," came from the prisoner.

But he was only bluffing now, as they could all tell by the tone of his voice.

"Maybe I do, but what I am saying is the truth, and you know it, but of course will not admit it. You are doomed, Dan Hubbard. You will never get away from us alive, unless you go as a prisoner."

"How do you feel now, you measly coyote?" Cheyenne Charlie asked, as he kicked at the helpless man to show his contempt for him.

"Don't do that, Charlie," the young deadshot spoke up, quickly. "He's bound hand and foot now, so don't abuse him."

"I didn't hurt him any, but blamed if I don't feel like kickin' his whole head off," the scout declared.

"Girls," Wild said, after a short silence, "go back to your tent and lie down. You may just as well sleep, for you will gain nothing by keeping awake and worrying. I feel confident that Arietta will soon be restored to us."

There was something that was almost exasperating in the wonderful coolness the boy displayed.

But they were all so used to his ways that they quickly began to feel that what he said was right.

But Anna and Eloise were in no hurry to retire to the tent again.

They were very much awake now, and it is doubtful if they would get any more sleep during the balance of the night.

There was one inmate of the camp who was sleeping soundly through it all, however.

This was Wing Wah, the cook.

The screams of Arietta and the shots that had been fired must certainly have aroused him for the moment at least, but if such was the case he had dropped off into slumber again, and there he lay on the blanket in the tent just as if nothing had happened.

Wild sat down and proceeded to arrange his cartridge belt.

Charlie and Jim stood watching him, neither saying a word, while Hop squatted near the prisoner.

After a while Anna and Eloise announced that they were going back in the tent.

Jim walked over and assured his sweetheart that she had better take things easy, as Wild had advised, and then for the second time that night he bade her good-night.

Ten minutes passed with scarcely a word being spoken.

Then Cheyenne Charlie, who could contain himself no longer, looked earnestly at the young deadshot and said:

"Ain't it about time we started out, Wild?"

"In a few minutes, Charlie," was the reply. "I want to give them time to make them feel that they are secure in the cave. It's a pretty sure thing that they are not aware that I know just where they are located. But naturally they would be on the watch, thinking that we would follow them. The longer we remain away the more they will feel that such is not the case."

"I s'pose that's right," and the scout sat down, though he was plainly very uneasy.

It would have been difficult for a person of the average temperament to act as Young Wild West did just then.

Nine out of ten would have rushed pell-mell in a wild pursuit if their sweetheart had been so rudely torn from them.

But as has before been stated, this was not the first time by any means that Arietta had met with such an adventure.

It was just about half an hour after the kidnaping occurred when Wild declared that he was ready to set out.

"Now then, boys," he said, as he nodded to Charlie and Jim, "I want you two to go with me. I am going to let Hop remain in charge of our prisoner."

"Right you are, Wild!" the scout exclaimed. "I reckon the heathen kin do his part all right. He ain't in the habit of lettin' prisoners git away, not when he's told to watch 'em."

"Me fixee velly muchee quickee, Mislér Charlie," the clever Chinnee answered, and then he ran and got a lariat.

There happened to be a tree close by, and dragging the helpless outlaw as if he had been the carcass of a buck to it, Hop hastened to use the rope so it would be impossible for the man to get away.

Wild thought it was a good idea, so he remained until he saw that the Chinaman had tied the prisoner securely to the tree.

Then he nodded, and without a word turned toward the slope that was directly ahead of them.

Charlie and Jim were more than glad to start out to save

Arietta, and up the hill they went right at the heels of their dashing young leader.

Wild paused when he reached the trail, and after satisfying himself that the outlaws were nowhere near at hand, he stepped lightly along and soon came to the rocks where the path that led through to the cave of the outlaws started.

When he came to it he waited until Charlie and Jim joined him, and then in a whisper said:

"Now then, Charlie, you keep about half a dozen feet behind me. Jim can remain the same distance behind you. Have your guns in readiness, for we can't tell what moment we might have to use them. Dan Hubbard's lieutenant, as he calls him, certainly has shown himself to be capable of doing a few things on his own hook, and he might give us another surprise."

The two nodded, and then after listening for fully half a minute without hearing anything that would indicate the presence of a human being anywhere close at hand, Wild continued along the path.

He scarcely stopped until he came to the very spot where he had crouched and listened to the conversation that had passed between the outlaw leader and his lieutenant.

The black spot almost directly before him he knew must be the mouth of the cave.

But there were so many overhanging branches, and there being a steep cliff running directly upward, it was much darker than out somewhere in an open spot.

No sounds came from the cave, but this meant nothing, for all three knew it was quite possible that it might extend far back under the earth.

Wild motioned for his companions to follow him, and then creeping forward on his hands and knees, quickly found himself entering the cave.

It was as dark as a pocket inside.

The fact was he could not see even the outlines of anything.

But accustomed to venturing into such places, he moved along to the left until he came to a rough, rocky wall, and then rising to his feet he stepped along noiselessly, feeling his way carefully as he did so.

He knew his partners were right behind him, so he hardly took the trouble of turning his head.

After going along for about twenty feet he found himself at a sharp turn.

A cool draught of air came from somewhere, too, and this told him that there must be an opening somewhere else in the underground place.

As he turned the corner he saw a light which he knew must come from a lamp or lantern.

It was not very far away, either, so he stepped back, and as Charlie and Jim came up close to him he informed them of it.

"Now then," he whispered, "we have got them dead to rights. But the best thing you two can do is to remain right here until I investigate."

They promptly told him they would do so, and then he stepped along and soon came to that part of the cave which was occupied by the outlaw band.

As the boy peered around a corner of the rocky wall he saw a lantern resting upon a rough board table.

Near it sat a man with his arm in a sling, and he knew right away that it was the outlaw he had wounded that afternoon.

He was forced to take another step to see anything further, and when he did so and discovered two men sitting on a rock, each with a revolver in his hand, he was somewhat surprised.

But it was evident they were guarding some one or something, and naturally the boy thought it must be his sweetheart.

He soon found that such was the case, for as his eyes became accustomed to the poor light in the cave he saw a form sitting in a dark corner.

It was Arietta, he knew, and it must be that the two men were guarding her, while the wounded man sat over at the table.

But where were the rest of the outlaws?

That was somewhat puzzling to him at first.

However, he decided that they must be outside somewhere, probably trying to find a way to rescue their leader.

Wild knew that he could easily open fire on the three villains in the cave and put an end to their lives in quick order.

Then he would be able to take Arietta out of the cave in a hurry.

But he was not ready to shoot the villains down, even though he knew they were after his life.

He decided that the best thing to do was to go back and get Charlie and Jim to help him.

Then the three might be overpowered and made prisoners.

Making up his mind to do this, he turned to go back, but just as he did so he heard footsteps in the outer part of the cave.

Certainly Charlie and Jim would not make all that noise if they were walking about, so there was only one conclusion to come to, and that was that the rest of the members of the band were coming.

The boy stepped back, feeling that his two partners would quickly take care of those who were coming.

But in doing so he went just a little too far, and was discovered by the wounded man, who quickly uttered a sharp cry of alarm.

At the same moment the voice of Cheyenne Charlie rang out sharply, and then the sounds of a struggle were heard further out in the cave.

Wild knew he was in for it now, so turning toward the two men who were running toward him, he exclaimed:

"Hands up! I have got you dead to rights."

Up went the hands of the two instantly as they came to a dead standstill.

But not so with Sanders, the man with the broken arm.

With his good hand he seized an empty barrel that was right near him and sent it straight at the boy.

Before he could avoid it the barrel struck him in the side and then Wild went to the ground, his hand still clutching the revolver.

Crack!

He fired as the two men lowered their hands and pounced upon him.

One of them gave a sharp cry and dropped, but the other fell upon the boy and wrenched the revolver from his hand.

Then Sanders rushed to the spot and lent his assistance, and the result was that the young deadshot was quickly overpowered and made a prisoner.

Shouting and shooting came from the outer cave during this time, and presently a man rushed in.

It was Dick.

"Look out, boys!" he called out. "Git back in a corner. They're after us. They're all done for but me. It was shootin' in the dark, but I could see by the flashes that they went down."

Then for the first time he saw that the two men were holding a struggling form to the ground.

"It's young Wild West. We've got him," the wounded man cried, excitedly.

"Ha!" Dick exclaimed. "Is that so?"

Then he pounced upon the helpless boy and joined in dragging him back to the corner where Wild was sure he had seen Arietta sitting.

The girl was there all right, but she was tied hand and foot, while a handkerchief was bound tightly about her mouth to prevent her from making an outcry.

No doubt she had been struggling violently to release herself when she realized that her dashing young lover had been overpowered.

But she could no more than move half a dozen feet, and certainly was powerless to lend him any assistance.

Now it was too late, for, like herself, Wild was a prisoner.

CHAPTER VII.

CHARLIE AND JIM ARE PUZZLED.

Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart did exactly as the young deadshot told them.

They remained right at the sharp turn in the dark cave waiting for him to come back and tell them what the next move should be.

But when they suddenly became aware that the cave was being entered by more than one man, they felt right away that some of the outlaws must have been outside when they arrived there.

Naturally they made ready to fire.

But both knew quite well that Wild wanted to take the outlaws alive if it were possible, so they tried to find a place to hide so they might not be discovered.

It happened just then that a match was struck by one of those approaching, and they knew if they so much as moved they would be seen.

They crouched close to the wall while a lantern was lighted by one of the men who had just entered.

But when they counted five of them and saw them coming directly toward them they knew that something had to be done.

Then it was that Charlie yelled out to them to hold up their hands.

The man with the lantern placed it on the rocky floor in a hurry and jumped back, while his companions promptly opened fire with their revolvers.

But fortunately the bullets did not hit Charlie and Jim, and they answered the shots.

Each dropped a man at the first attempt, and then the shots came faster than ever.

The two dropped to the floor as one of the villains fired a shot that extinguished the lantern.

There was nothing to do now but to take a chance, so they kept firing at random, and just as they had about emptied the chambers of their revolvers a man leaped over them and darted around a turn.

This was Dick, of course, and the two heard him talking in the other part of the cave, though they were a little too far from it, and there being such a thickness of rock between them that they could not understand the words or guess what had happened there.

After lying there for a couple of minutes, Charlie touched Jim on the arm, and then arose to his feet.

Thinking that possibly Wild might have gone out by another way, they crept softly through the darkness, and after coming in contact with the stiffening forms of two of the outlaws, they reached the outlet.

"Whew!" the scout exclaimed, as he breathed a sigh of relief. "What are we goin' to do now, Jim?"

"The first thing to do is to find Wild," was the reply. "I am satisfied he is back in the cave somewhere yet."

"But he might have gone out. There sartinly is another way to git out, you know."

"I don't believe that," was the whispered reply.

"Somebody jumped right over us, you know."

"Yes, but he was going the wrong way to get out."

"That's so, too, though blamed if I could tell which direction he jumped. A feller is bound to git putty well mixed up in a place like that."

"I'm certain that whoever it was that jumped over us went the same way that Wild did, and that means that he has had no chance to come out."

"Yes, I s'pose so. All right. Blamed if I know what to do."

"We've got to go back in there and look for Wild. We know that Arietta is a prisoner in there, and that he left us at the turn in therè in the dark to go and investigate after he saw a light. There were five men who came in, but that isn't the whole number of the outlaws, you know."

"There was five of 'em what come in, sure enough, but I reckon all but one of 'em got downed."

"We don't know about that."

"Well, I feel that way, anyhow. There was only one what jumped over us when we was stretched out on the floor to dodge the bullets what was flyin' through the dark."

"Come on, we'll go in and find out. Unless something has happened to Wild, we'll hear from him."

"S'pose we call out to him."

"We will, but wait until we get inside and find a good place to hide first."

Without saying anything further Dart turned and re-entered the cave.

He knew it was a risky thing to do, but bent upon finding out what the result of the shooting had been, he struck a match, at the same time keeping close to the rough wall at the left.

As the flame flared up and sent out a light for a short distance he saw one man stretched out on the ground, while another lay doubled up near it.

They were dead outlaws, he was sure.

The match went out, and then Jim boldly walked across to the other side of the cave and struck another.

He found a man just breathing his last here, and waiting until the breath left him, he ventured a little further, and another match was lighted.

Then he came upon the fourth, so he knew that Charlie was right in his conjecture.

Five had come in, but only one had succeeded in escaping and getting further back into the cave.

The scout had been kneeling a short distance away, a revolver in either hand, while Jim lighted the matches.

But no one had showed up, so he now struck a match himself and walked over to where the boy was standing.

Jim nodded for him to come on, and stepped softly along until he came to the very spot where Wild had left them when he proceeded toward the light to make an investigation.

They looked around the turn and saw the light all right.

But neither felt like venturing any further toward it, since

they knew that there was at least one villain there who would not hesitate to shoot them down on sight.

"Charlie," Dart whispered, "call out to Wild. You can do it better than I can."

"Right you are," came the quick reply, and then the scout raised his voice and shouted:

"Wild. Wild! Hello, hello!"

"Look out, boys. Don't come this way. There are three of them waiting for you. Don't——"

It was the voice of the young deadshot, but what he had intended to say was cut short, and Charlie and Jim both understood why.

A hand had undoubtedly been clapped over his mouth.

But they had heard enough to let them know it would be dangerous to proceed toward the light.

"Great gimlets!" Charlie exclaimed, as he stepped back close to the side of his companion. "Matters is gittin' a whole lot worse instead of better. They've gone an' got Wild now. What do you think of it, Jim? Got him an' Arietta, too."

"It can't be helped, Charlie," was the reply. "But there is one thing sure; we have got the leader of the gang, and I reckon that about offsets it. The thing to do now is to find a means that will enable us to beat them out. Of course it might be easy to arrange to exchange the prisoners, for surely they ought to be willing to give up Wild and Arietta for their leader."

"We ain't goin' to do that, unless there ain't no other way out of it," Charlie declared.

Jim nodded, for he thoroughly agreed with the scout on that point.

But they both felt that something must be done without delay.

The three outlaws who held Wild and Arietta captives might at any moment decide to kill the young deadshot.

However, it would be nothing short of suicide to proceed on through the passage and attempt a rescue.

Dart thought hard just then, while the scout stood looking at him.

A short silence ensued, and then Jim said:

"I reckon the best thing we can do right now, Charlie, is to try and find another means of getting into that cave."

"That's it!" the scout exclaimed. "There sartinly must be another way, for there's an openin' somewhere. The draught of air blowin' through is enough to let us know that."

"Come on, then."

So saying, Jim led the way out of the cave and started along the foot of the cliff to the left of the mouth of the cave.

Charlie was right after him, and they went along for a distance of fully a hundred yards before they found a way to mount to the high ground above.

Once they did find it they were not long in going upward.

Reaching a small plateau which was well covered with trees and other vegetation, they turned back in the direction they had come, hoping to get directly above the cave and discover an opening somewhere.

But nothing of the sort could they find when they got there, and then bound to keep up a search until some good result was obtained, Jim suggested that they proceed across the plateau.

Through a patch of dense woods they made their way, and just about two hundred yards from the edge of the cliff they found themselves descending a steep hill, where there were no trees, though bushes and rocks were plentiful.

The sound made by rushing water came to their ears, and as neither of them knew there was anything like a stream bigger than an ordinary brook in the vicinity, they were somewhat surprised.

A little further down and they came to the brink of a chasm.

In the bright starlight they could see quite a distance below, and it took but a glance for them to realize that they were looking down into a narrow canyon, at the bottom of which was a swiftly-flowing stream.

"Here we are, Charlie," Jim Dart said, turning to the scout and shaking his head to show that he thought they had not gained much by coming that way. "It may be that there is an opening in the cliff below us that leads on through to the cavernous place in which the headquarters of the outlaws is located. But we have no means of finding out, so I suppose we're just as badly off as when we first climbed up to the plateau."

"That's where I was a fool for not bringin' a lariat with me," the scout declared. "If I had one you could lower me down an' I'd blamed soon find out if there was a way to git into that blasted big cave."

"Well, Charlie, it wouldn't take a great while to get back to

the camp and get a rope. I have an idea that we can make a short-cut right from this point. The trail must be lying off that way, and quite close by, at that."

He pointed to the left as he spoke.

"Right you are, Jim. I'll go back an' git a rope. You kin stay here till I git back."

Jim nodded, for he was hopeful that with the rope they might succeed in finding another way to get into the underground place and do something to save Wild and Arietta.

Charlie looked ahead and made sure that it would be easy for him to make his way in that direction, and started back without any further delay.

When he found that he had but a short distance to go to reach the trail he was more than pleased.

Once he got there he simply had to walk a dozen paces and he was looking down at the camp.

It did not take him long to get there.

Hop was sitting down near the prisoner, and everything was quiet.

The Chinaman arose as the scout appeared.

"Whattie mattee, Misler Charlie?" he asked.

"A whole lot's the matter, heathen," was the reply. "The outlaws has got Wild as well as Arietta."

"Ha. ha. ha!" laughed Dan Hubbard, fiendishly. "Once more my bold lieutenant has outwitted you."

"That may be, you sneakin' coyote. But jest keep your mouth shut or I'll put a bullet through you, even if you are tied hand an' foot," Charlie answered, angrily. "Maybe you heard some shootin' up this way, an' if you did I'll let you know that four of your men got killed. There's only three of 'em left, an' they're in that blamed cave of yours with Young Wild West an' the gal. It's sich a narrow place to go through in order to git to 'em that we allowed that it wouldn't be jest the right thing to do, so we've made up our minds to git in another way. I'm goin' to take a rope over there an' lower myself down the cliff on the back side of the cave, an' git in that way."

The scout leaned over and watched the effect of his words as he said this.

The glare of the lantern was shining directly upon the outlaw leader's face, and the start he gave told Charlie instantly that he had hit upon the right thing when he mentioned the fact that he meant to lower himself over the cliff and look for a means of entrance to the cave.

"One of your men told me an' Jim jest afore he died," the scout answered, thinking it advisable to tell an untruth just to help matters along.

"He did, eh? The fool!" and the angry gleam that showed in the prisoner's eyes told how vexed he was. "Are you telling me the truth?" he went on, looking sharply at Charlie, "when you say that four of my men were shot?"

"You kin bet your life I am, an' I wish I was able to say that all of 'em was shot. But they ain't. Three of 'em has got Wild an' Arietta, jest as I said."

"And you mean to go there and save them by means of a rope?"

"That's it exactly. I know it kin be done, an' I'm goin' to do it as soon as possible."

"You can save all that trouble if you like."

"How kin I?" Charlie asked, quickly, as he leaned closer to him.

"Liberate me. I promise you that if you do, Young Wild West and his sweetheart will be permitted to come directly here as soon as I can get to the cave and set them free."

"You must think I'm a fool!" Charlie exclaimed, angrily. "As if I would do anything like that."

Then he turned away from him and quickly secured the lariat he had come for.

Anna and Eloise had come from their tent by this time, and they wanted to know all about what had happened.

When Charlie had told them and was about to leave the spot the prisoner called to him again.

"See here," he said, "if you fear that I won't keep my word in the matter, I'll arrange it in another way. Free my right hand for a few minutes, and I'll write a note which you can deliver to my lieutenant. After reading it he will promptly release Young Wild West and the girl. But before I write the note you must promise me that I will be set free the moment they come back."

Charlie hesitated.

At first he felt inclined to make the agreement.

But he knew very well that Wild did not want Dan Hubbard to go free, so he answered:

"No. I won't do nothin' of the kind. You're doomed to be

put in the hands of the sheriff, if you live till we kin find him. I'll go an' do as I said I'd do."

"Better change your mind. You might fail in your attempt," came from the prisoner.

"Never mind that," Charlie retorted. "Hop, jest keep an eye on him. Don't let him git away. If you do you'll never dare to show your face to Wild ag'in."

"Lat allee light, Misler Charlie. Me watchee velly muchee good, so be. Me velly smartee Chinee," the Celestial answered.

Then the scout bade Anna and Eloise go to their tent, and he promptly started off with the lariat, which he had slung over his shoulder.

He went on at a run, and in less than five minutes he saw Jim standing at the brink of the precipice waiting anxiously for him.

"I've got the rope, all right," he called out, "an' I reckon this notion of mine is goin' to work."

"I hope so," Jim answered, as he hastened to meet him. "I've been looking downward, and even though it's quite dark down there, I am satisfied there is a ledge not more than forty feet below."

Charlie at once began uncolling the rope.

He told of his conversation with Dan Hubbard as he was doing this, and Jim became greatly interested.

"The chances are we will succeed," the latter declared. "Put the rope under your arms, and I'll lower you down."

It was but the work of a minute for the scout to obey, and then after Jim had taken a turn about a convenient tree, he let himself over the edge of the cliff and slowly descended down the face of it.

CHAPTER VIII.

ARIETTA'S PERIL INCREASES.

The three outlaws did not seem to regard it necessary to tie the hands of Young Wild West after they had made him a prisoner.

He was forced to lie upon the ground within a few feet of his helpless sweetheart, Dick kneeling upon his breast with one knee and keeping a revolver close to his head.

"Sanders, fetch that lantern here," the villain called out. "Pete, you step over to the left, an' be ready to shoot if them other two tries to git in here."

Both men obeyed.

When Sanders held the lantern close to the young deadshot, Dick said in a tantalizing way:

"Take a look at your gal, Young Wild West, 'cause I mean it to be the last time you'll ever see her. I've sorter made up my mind that the best thing we kin do with you is to git rid of you right away. I know Dan Hubbard would do it if he was here, an' I'm takin' it on myself. Now then, look at her, an' see how innocent an' putty she looks."

"Keep up your courage, Et," the young deadshot said, as he turned his face toward her.

Arietta could not make a verbal reply, but the nod she gave him told that she was quite calm in spite of her perilous situation.

"There, that will do," Dick said. "You have seen the last of her, an' she's seen the last of you. It happens that there's a fine hole to chuck you in, an' after you have rolled down for a few hundred feet you'll land as dead as a door-nail into the water. Funny place this is, but it's a mighty good one for our purpose. We'll kill you, an' then we'll have the gal to trade for Dan, if there ain't no other way of gittin' him free."

"Goin' to chuck him down the natural chute, Dick?" Sanders asked, as if he was somewhat surprised.

"That's jest what I'm goin' to do. While Pete's keepin' watch you jest roll the big stone away. You kin do it all right, even if you have only got one hand."

"Oh, I kin do it all right, I reckon."

"Go ahead, then. Take a lantern with you, so you kin see."

Sanders promptly turned and hurried toward the other side of the cave.

It was quite a big place, and he went so far that Arietta and the two villains were left in the darkness.

The girl's heart was beating wildly now, for she felt certain that Wild was to be put to death.

She struggled to free herself, and actually rolled over so her head came in contact with her lover's arm.

At that moment Cheyenne Charlie shouted from the other part of the cave, and Wild answered him as quick as a flash, only to have his words cut off by Dick's hand, which was placed over his mouth.

But the warning was enough, and the boy knew it.

Dick swore in an undertone, but kept the revolver close to the boy's head.

"You jest try that ag'in," he said, "an' I'll shoot you afore I chuck you down the chute. I'd rather put you down there alive, though, 'cause you might live a few seconds or maybe a little more, an' that would punish you all the worse. You have run your race in this here world, Young Wild West, an' now your time has come. Never ag'in will you meddle with outlaws an' sich like. You're only a kid, an' some might think it a shame that you have got to die so young. But look all the good that will come from it. You can't never interfere with any one ag'in, not in this world, anyhow."

"You're nothin' short of a fool if you really intend to kill me," the boy answered, coolly.

"Is that so? I'll take the chances on that. Dan Hubbard always allowed that I had a putty good head on me, an' I ain't never made a mistake yet. I ain't this time."

"All ready, Dick," came from the other side of the cave.

It was Sanders who was speaking.

"All right," was the reply. "Come over here an' we'll settle this business right away."

The wounded man hurried to the spot, carrying the lantern with him.

"Hear anything, Pete?" Dick asked, as he stepped over toward the man who was on guard.

"Not a thing," was the reply. "They don't dare to come this way, that's sure."

"All right, then. I reckon you had better light another lantern, so you kin make sure that they don't sneak up on you."

Sanders quickly found another lantern and lighted it.

Then he placed it where Pete told him to, and they were ready to proceed to put Young Wild West to death.

"Got your gun ready, Sanders?" Dick asked.

"Yes."

"All right. I'll put mine away, then. You jest keep the muzzle of it close to the kid's breast. If he tries to break away, shoot him. Don't forgit to do that, 'cause I know Dan will say it was all right."

"I'll do it quick enough. I've got it in for him, anyhow. I've only got the use of one arm on his account," came the reply.

Wild felt the other revolver pressed against his breast, and then Dick seized him by the arms and started to drag him over the rocky flooring of the cave.

A muffled shriek came from Arietta at this.

Wild attempted to make a struggle, but when he felt the revolver pressed against him and saw the gleaming eyes of Sanders, he became quiet instantly.

Many things flashed through his mind at that moment.

But the one hope he had now was that his life might be spared, and to force the villain to shoot him was not the thing to do.

He would take his chances of being hurled downward into the depths of some deep hole rather than have it done.

Dick was a powerful man, anyhow, but it seemed to be easy for him to drag the boy to the mouth of a small opening through which came a draught of damp air.

Wild felt it on his face.

It was cooling, but did not suggest anything but death.

"In with him," Sanders said, and then he gave the boy a pull forward and let go of him.

Wild threw out both hands in an effort to clutch at the rocks on either side of him, but Dick struck downward with his foot and caused him to fall backward.

A despairing cry came from the lips of the young deadshot, and then there was a rattling of dirt and stones.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Dick, fiendishly. "That's the end of him, an' I know it. We chucked a man down there once afore, didn't we, Sanders?"

"I reckon we did," the wounded man answered, with a chuckle. "He never come back, an' it ain't likely Young Wild West will."

Arietta was on the verge of fainting now, for she could hear the words of the two villains.

She actually thought that the life of her dashing young lover had been taken at last.

Many times had he been in peril, but this seemed to be the climax of it all, and now no longer the brave young deadshot would show his skill and assist in keeping law and order in the great West.

The girl fell back and remained dazed for some little time.

She was finally brought to herself when she heard the two villains who had thrown the boy down the chute talking in low tones near her.

She tried to say something, but could not, for the handkerchief had been tied only too well about her mouth.

"What next, Dick?" Sanders asked, as he turned to walk over to the fellow called Pete, who was keeping guard.

"I s'pose we had better wait till daylight afore we do anything more," was the reply. "If we find that we can't save Dan, we had better go down to the bottom of the canyon an' light out in the big canoe. I'm afraid it won't do for us to strike out with the horses. There'll be fifty men lookin' for us the first thing in the mornin', you kin bet on that, an' Young Wild West's pards will steer 'em here mighty quick."

"Sorter hard to have to leave here without Dan. It's bad enough as it is. Look at them what's been shot since Young Wild West come around here."

"Can't be helped, Sanders. There ain't no use of cryin' over spilled milk. I s'pose the time had to come when somethin' would go wrong with us. It's come now. We're in for it, an' we've got to make the best of it. But as I said jest now, it won't pay for us to hang around here very long. You know what Dan always said. There was that big dug-out canoe down there in the canyon. If we wanted to git away quick all we had to do was to git in it an' go down the stream. There's more than enough current to take us along without doin' any paddlin', so all one of us will have to do is to steer. The only thing he always talked about was that the dug-out wasn't big enough to take the whole bunch of us. But I'm sartin sure it will take the three of us an' the gal, too. We're goin' to take her with us, Sanders, an' don't you forgit that. If we can't save Dan, we'll see to it that her friends will never see her ag'in."

Poor Arietta!

It was piling it hard upon her now.

While she still had a faint hope that Wild had not perished, it seemed to be that such was true, and she was destined to suffer a fate that was worse than death at the hands of the three outlaws.

Pete remained on guard, never once complaining of the tediousness, while Dick and Sanders kept on talking in the same strain.

When an hour had passed in this way Dick walked over to the man on watch and said:

"Go ahead an' lay down. It won't be an awful while afore daylight comes. I'll see to it that them two pards of Young Wild West's never gits here. I only wish they would show up, though, as I'd like to punish 'em the same as we punished him."

The man gave a nod and quickly did as directed.

He threw himself on a blanket not far from the helpless girl, while Sanders, who seemed to be as wide awake as ever, sat down, and after some difficulty filled and lighted a pipe with the nand he was able to use.

Then a deathly silence came.

Arietta could breathe all right through her nostrils, but she did not grow sleepy.

A dizzy sensation came upon her, however, after a while, and gradually she drifted into a semi-unconscious state, being unable to move, even if her hands had not been tied securely behind her.

It was past midnight when the girl had been kidnaped and taken to the cave, and the time that had elapsed drew it well along toward morning.

Still it seemed to be a long time before the first sign of daylight appeared in the cave.

It came through an opening that was almost directly opposite to the entrance they had come in, and as the gray light gradually grew throughout the underground place, the girl found herself staring at the bleak, rocky walls and ceiling.

The villain called Pete was sleeping soundly near her, while Sanders had permitted his chin to drop upon his breast, the pipe long since having fallen from his hand.

Dick, however, sat upon a rock, revolver in hand, where he could watch for the approach of any one who might try to get into that part of the cave.

Ten minutes passed, and it was then so light that Dick suddenly walked over and extinguished the lantern that had been left burning.

"Wake up, boys," the villain called out, suddenly. "I ain't changed my mind one bit. I'm satisfied that the only thing we kin do is to git down to the canoe an' light out. Come on. We can't help Dan, an' that's all there is to it."

Sanders awoke quickly, but not so with Pete.

It required a little shaking to rouse him, but once he got upon his feet he moved about cautiously, and made ready to leave the place.

Arietta was forced to get upon her feet.

Her ankles were not tied, but the cruel rope still held her wrists behind her back.

"Gal, it ain't very far you have got to go," Dick said, smiling fiendishly. "Maybe I ain't doin' exactly right by the man what always stuck to me, meanin' Dan Hubbard, of course, but I can't see no other way out of it. I ain't wantin' to have my neck stretched, an' bein' a genuine outlaw, the best thing I kin do is to git away. We're goin' to take you in a canoe on a little trip down through the canyon. We'll cover eight or ten miles in that way, an' then we'll hoof it along until we come to a minin' camp which I happen to know of, where it will be easy to git horses, 'cause none of us ain't known there. Of course I'm goin' to take all the money we've got here in the cave with me. It's quite a lot, too, gal, an' maybe I might take a notion to marry you. It all depends upon how you act. I did say as how I never would marry, but what Dan said early in the night about you has set me doin' some thinkin'. He allowed that you was to be his bride, but since that can't never be, you may as well be mine."

Again Arietta struggled to free herself, even kicking at the villain as if she felt that she ought to injure him in some way.

But Dick only laughed, and turning from her he busied himself about a corner of the cave for a few minutes.

When he came out his pockets were bulging, and as he appeared he said laughingly:

"Money, gal! Heaps of it. Now come on. Pete, you gather up what grub you kin carry, an' be sure that you have got plenty of cartridges. We'll leave the cave jest as it is, horses an' all."

Five minutes later the three men conducted Arietta, who was forced to walk with them, into a dark passage which led downward.

For many feet they proceeded on, Pete lighting the way with a lantern, and then the sound of rushing water came to the girl's ears, and she could see light ahead.

She knew that they must have gone down a considerable distance, for in some places the way was so steep that she narrowly missed slipping and injuring herself, since she had no means of holding upon anything with her hands.

Dick was not very careful about her, either, even though he had told her that she was likely to become his bride.

As they emerged from the opening of the steep passage the girl looked upward and saw the steep sides of a canyon on either side, the distance between them being very short.

"Git the canoe," Dick said, nodding to the fellow called Pete.

"All right," was the reply, and turning to the left he hurried along a rocky ledge and quickly pulled from a little inlet a big dug-out canoe.

There were paddles in it, as well as some blankets and a roll of canvas, which showed that Dan Hubbard had seen to it that in case he ever had to make a hasty escape by that means, things would be in readiness.

Arietta was forced into the canoe, and then the three men got in and it was pushed off.

The swift current swung the prow around, and a minute later the craft was heading down the stream.

CHAPTER IX.

THE MISHAP OF CHARLIE AND JIM.

The rope Cheyenne Charlie had brought from the camp was just about long enough to permit him to be lowered to the ledge Jim Dart had seen from above.

Once his feet struck it the scout gave a gentle pull upon the rope to let Dart know that he was all right.

Then with the rope still about his body, he started to walk along the ledge, which was quite wide where he had landed.

But a few steps and he found it was so narrow that it would be dangerous to proceed.

He felt now for an opening in the rocks which might in some way connect with the cave.

But while there were niches here and there, no such place could be found.

Having gone as far as he could one way, he turned and went back the other, Jim walking along the top of the cliff as he felt the rope tighten, for he could not let it out any further.

For ten minutes Charlie kept up the search, but was doomed to disappointment.

There was no means of getting into the cave by that way, so reluctantly he gave the signal and Dart pulled him to the top of the cliff.

"Ain't no use, Jim," he said, shaking his head sadly. "I might try it a little further up, but it don't seem to me as if it

will amount to anything. I reckon we've got to git around to the other side an' go in that cave, the same as we did afore."

"We'll try again, anyhow," Jim replied, hopefully. "We'll go on to the left and then you can lower me down. Maybe I'll have better luck."

The two then moved along the edge of the cliff for about fifty feet, and Jim was quickly lowered downward by the scout.

The boy kept feeling of the cliff as he slowly went downward, and when he was about twenty feet from the top he found a yawning hole right before him.

"Stop, Charlie," he called out, loud enough for the scout to hear.

"What's the matter, Jim?" came the reply, as the command was obeyed.

"Just wait a minute. I've found what we've been looking for, I think."

"Great gimlets! Is that so?"

"Pull me up about two feet."

Charlie did so, and then Jim reached out and catching upon a jagged point of rock, swung himself right into the mouth of a cave, as it appeared to be.

Naturally, the boy thought he had at last found a way to get into the underground place where Wild and Arietta were being held prisoners.

There was a good footing there, so leaning out a little he called to Charlie.

"Can you make the rope fast and come down here?" he asked, after he had received a reply.

"I reckon so. I'll be there in a jiffy, Jim."

Dart quickly removed the rope from about his body, but held fast to the end of it, and presently he could tell that Charlie was descending.

He reached out and assisted him to get a footing inside the opening.

"Do you think this leads into that cave, Jim?" the scout asked, eagerly.

"I hope so," was the reply. "We'll soon find out. Now then, I'll make the rope fast here so we'll have a means of getting up there again in case we can't go very far."

Charlie struck a match and looked around.

At first he thought it was merely a shallow cave, but before the match died out he saw a narrow opening to the left, which looked as if it might be the beginning of a passage.

While Jim was attending to the rope he struck another match and went over to the spot.

Sure enough, it was the mouth of a passage which ran downward.

This was not exactly what he wanted, for it struck him that the cave must be about on a level with them, as they were standing on the rocky floor.

But it was worth trying, so when Jim came to him another match was struck and the two looked as far as they could into the passage, which was not a great distance, since it ran in anything but a straight form.

"We ought to have a light of some kind," Jim said, "but since we have plenty of matches, I suppose we can make out. Go on, Charlie. You discovered the passage, so you can lead the way. But be very careful."

Then each struck a match and entered the dark place.

At first it was easy going, but when the scout had gone about a dozen feet he found that the way was becoming steeper.

He stepped upon a projection of rock and held a match before him.

"A regular chute down there, Jim," he said. "Come here an' see if you kin see anything below that looks like a cave."

Jim stepped down after him, and the very moment his feet struck the projection of rock it gave way beneath the pair of them, and in spite of all they could do they went sliding downward with great velocity.

Fortunately the steep slant of rock was quite slippery, and devoid of projections; otherwise they might have been badly hurt or possibly killed.

They could not catch upon anything to save themselves, so continued on downward until they landed heavily upon a bed of sand.

"Great gimlets!" the scout exclaimed, as he recovered his breath and got upon his feet. "What do you think of that, Jim?"

There was no reply, for Jim had received a bump on his head that rendered him temporarily unconscious.

A strange fear came over the scout, for he thought right away that Dart had been killed.

With a hand that trembled slightly he struck a match and then leaned over the boy, who was lying flat upon his back upon the sand, his face upturned.

The scout placed a hand upon his heart, and found that it was beating.

Then with a sigh of relief he proceeded to make an examination to find out how badly he was hurt.

"A good crack on the head, that's all. It's bleedin' a little, but it won't amount to much," was the verdict he rendered.

Then he shook Jim's arm gently and said:

"Hey! wake up."

"Eh, what's that?" came the quick reply, and then dazed and confused, Dart struggled to a sitting posture.

"Head a little sore, ain't it?" Charlie asked, as he rubbed the bump gently.

"Gracious!" Jim exclaimed, as he quickly realized where he was. "We're in a nice hole now, Charlie."

"I reckon so," was the reply. "Come down mighty fast, didn't we? But that's all right. We ain't goin' to give up yet."

"No, and we are not going to get up there very soon, either," Jim answered, as he turned and strove to pierce the darkness of the passage.

But there was no use in looking in that direction.

He knew very well that it would be impossible for them to climb upward, so the only thing to do now was to look for another means of getting out of the underground place.

After tying a handkerchief about his bleeding head, Jim struck a match and then began looking about.

"Lucky there was a lot of sand here for us to fall upon, Charlie," he said, as he kicked it with his foot. "Looks as if water had been here at one time."

"Come on this way," Charlie said, not noticing the remark. "Here's a wide passage right ahead, an' I reckon it will take us somewhere."

Sure enough, there was a passage there, and as Charlie lighted a match to replace the one that had expired in Jim's hand, he hurried to obey.

Once they got inside the passage both could hear the sounds made by running water.

"I reckon we'll git out alright, though we ain't makin' no headway in gittin' Wild an' Arietta away from the outlaws," Charlie said.

Jim made no reply to this, but followed his companion, and almost in a minute they could see a faint light ahead.

They hurried along faster then, and quickly came out upon a sandy strip that was right at the bottom of the canyon.

The stream was rushing along right before them, and the bright stars were shining far above.

"This is what I call a mess for fair. How in thunder are we goin' to git out of this blamed narrow canyon?" Charlie asked, more disgusted than he was afraid.

"Oh, we can get out all right, I reckon," Jim answered. "It may take us a few minutes to do it, or probably an hour, but there certainly is a beginning and also an ending of this narrow cut through the canyon. We'll go on down this way, for it strikes me that our camp lies in that direction."

Charlie nodded, so they promptly set out, knowing that the quicker they got to the high ground above the better their chances would be of saving Wild and Arietta.

They walked along for about a hundred feet, and then the way became difficult.

In many places the water came up to the very foot of the almost perpendicular walls of rock.

But there were stones here and there that could be stepped upon, and both being well used to that sort of thing, they managed to work their way along until they had covered at least three hundred yards.

After that they found a long strip of sand, and they moved along more swiftly.

The canyon made a sharp turn to the right after that, and as they started to get around they suddenly discovered that their way was blocked, for the stream flowed on underground, and the canyon ended abruptly.

They looked up naturally, and when they saw how steep the sides were they knew it was out of the question to even think of such a thing as climbing up there.

"All for nothing, Charlie," Jim said, shaking his head sadly. "We have got to go back and try it the other way."

"An' time is flyin' all the time, Jim," the scout answered. "The first thing we know it will be beginnin' to git daylight."

"We can't help that. We are doing the best we can. This is what I call a queer adventure. But I am confident that we will get out all right, and that Wild and Arietta will be saved."

They rested a few minutes, for it had been quite tiresome work, and then started to make their way back.

Really it seemed to be more difficult than when they had come, but probably this was due to the fact that they felt that they had walked and climbed so far for nothing.

But at length they reached the opening of the passage they had emerged from, and then they stopped to take a rest.

Neither said a word for the space of five minutes, and then Jim turned to go up the canyon, as it might be called, since the water was running from that way.

"May as well go, I s'pose," Charlie said, in a tone of voice which showed that he was not very hopeful of getting out very soon.

They walked along through the darkness for fully five minutes, and then they came to a spot where the water ran in close to the side of the canyon.

"Can't go no further, I reckon, unless we swim, Jim," Charlie said, as he reached down with his foot to test the depth of the water.

"Seems that way," was the reply. "Well, I suppose we're due to stay here until daylight. I'm sure then we will be able to see a way to get out."

"That's jest what I was goin' to say. I've stuck my foot down clean to my knee, an' there ain't nothin' but water there. There's a mighty strong current, too, for it's whirlin' around in an eddy. Maybe it wouldn't be a good idea to swim."

"We certainly won't try it in the dark, anyhow. Come on, Charlie. We'll go right back to the passage we came out of, and then sit down and wait till daylight."

Back they went, retracing their steps until they came to the passage.

Then picking out a soft place, they threw themselves upon the ground and looked up at the twinkling stars above.

Certainly it was not encouraging to them, since they were deeply worried over the probable fate of Young Wild West and his sweetheart.

The minutes flitted by and soon drifted into an hour.

It was well toward morning now, as both knew.

Charlie struck a match and looked at his watch.

"Thunder!" he exclaimed. "It oughter begin to git daylight in about half an hour. I wish it would hurry up, Jim."

"Don't be impatient," advised the boy. "It never did any one a bit of good yet to lose his patience."

"That's all right, too. But I reckon there ain't a whole lot of folks as has been placed in a position like we're in jest now."

Charlie was ready to argue the question, and he kept at it for fully ten minutes.

Then Jim declared that he could notice that the sky overhead was growing lighter.

Charlie agreed with him, and from that time until it actually grew daylight they sat there and watched with a silent eagerness.

Deep down in the canyon it was bound to be quite dark, anyway, but after a while they were able to distinguish objects quite plainly.

They could note the crags that jutted out on the opposite side of the deep cut, and just as they decided to try again to find a means of getting out a footfall sounded behind them in the passage.

As quick as a flash the two drew their revolvers, for naturally they expected the outlaws were coming.

But what was their surprise two seconds later when Young Wild West appeared before them.

CHAPTER X.

WILD'S LUCKY DROP.

When Young Wild West found himself shooting downward after being forced into the dark opening, he surely thought his time had come.

It was only human that he should utter a cry, for life was sweet to him.

But the cry was cut short from his lips by a cloud of dust which nearly strangled him, and down he went, sliding part of the way and falling, too, for even though he was not going straight downward, there were rocky bumps to be met with.

But after turning the first somersault the boy found himself going feet foremost, and though he was turned over once or twice after that, he soon brought up with a sudden jar, and the sleeve of his shirt was almost torn from him.

But that sleeve was what saved his life, for it had become unbuttoned at the wrist, and must have caught into some sharp projection.

Anyhow, it swung him around and brought him heavily against a slimy wall.

It was so dark that if there had been a face within a few inches of his own the young deadshot could not possibly have seen it.

If such a thing had been he might have roused himself from the dizzy feeling that had come over him.

While he had no broken bones, the bumping he had received, especially about the head, caused a numbness to come over his senses, and giving vent to a long-drawn sigh of relief, he slowly stretched himself out at full length, and then dropped into a sort of stupor.

How long he remained this way the boy did not know exactly.

But it must have been for a considerable length of time, for when he finally opened his eyes a very faint light pervaded the place.

It might have been that the feeling of unconsciousness that had come upon him did him good, for beyond a stiffness and a slight dizziness in the head, the boy was virtually himself again as he raised his head and stared about him.

For a few seconds he sat erect, and then suddenly he gave a violent start and exclaimed:

"Ah! I know. I am not dead yet. The scoundrels! I'll beat them out as sure as I am alive. But what saved me, I would like to know?"

Then he slowly arose to his feet, and was about to take a step from the spot when he saw a yawning chasm before him.

It was through this the faint light was admitted, and as the boy gave a start and looked downward, he saw what he knew must be rushing water.

But more than that.

The sounds of it came to his ears.

"I see now," he muttered, as he looked upward. "The intention was that I should tumble on down into this hole and land in the water. I don't remember much about it after I turned a couple of somersaults and became choked with dust. But here I am, and I reckon I'm about as good as ever. Now then, to get out of here, for Arietta must be saved."

The boy felt of his right arm, which was very stiff and somewhat bruised.

But when he had worked the muscles a few times he knew it was as strong as ever.

Then he dropped upon his hands and knees and looked downward.

The distance to the water below was probably thirty feet, and less than half that way up was an opening through which came the light.

"It is morning," the boy thought, shaking his head. "The terrible shock put me to sleep, and it seems I must have slept pretty well, too. Well, all right. That can't be helped. I won't be too late, for the outlaws dare not harm Arietta, and it's a pretty sure thing that Dan Hubbard is still a prisoner at the camp."

Turning from the brink of the hole, he moved along to the left, and then much to his satisfaction came to a narrow opening which was just barely wide enough for him to squeeze through.

But he felt that this was the way out, so he went on through, and after working along for a few feet came to a passage which led down, he felt, to the water below, or somewhere near it.

It was quite easy to travel it, too, so on he went, and then he suddenly heard the sounds of voices as he came in the full glare of the light of the early morning.

Wild stopped still in his tracks, but only momentarily.

He recognized the voices of his two partners.

Without a word he stepped out and faced them, as has already been stated.

Amazed and delighted, Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart rushed forward to hug the boy they had vainly tried to rescue.

Explanations were made in less than five minutes, and when each understood what had happened to the other during the long hours of the night, they simply shook hands and agreed to look for a way to get back to the cave as quickly as possible.

"I'm satisfied that this place is full of passages," Wild declared. "Now, to hurry matters along, I'll proceed to the left, while you two go to the right. Look for some sort of an opening, or a way to ascend to the top of the precipice."

"Right you are, Wild," Cheyenne Charlie answered, and then handing Wild one of his revolvers, he turned and went to the right, Jim following him.

Wild went in the opposite direction, following the edge of the rushing stream.

It was not far that he had to go before he saw a chance to work his way up the side of the chasm.

Still stiff and sore from his awful experience, he began the climb, and in two minutes he had reached the narrow ledge

which neither Charlie nor Jim had failed to see in the darkness during the night.

Once upon this Wild followed it along, and then much to his joy he struck a sort of path which ran on upward.

It was now broad daylight, at least it was outside of the canyon, for the glow of the sunshine could be seen tinting the few clouds in the sky overhead.

A few minutes after he had parted company with Charlie and Jim, Young Wild West found himself standing upon a crag that hung directly over the stream below.

A tree was rooted in the ground near it, and leaning against it the boy looked in the direction his partners had taken in the hope of seeing them, so he might let them know of the success he had met with in being able to get very nearly to the top of the precipice.

They were nowhere to be seen, however, so he took a look around and naturally turned his gaze below him.

It happened at that very moment that the outlaws were leaving the shore with the canoe, Arietta a prisoner in the stern only fifty yards above.

There was a sharp bend near where the young deadshot was standing, and as he looked toward it he gave a violent start and then a low cry of amazement came from his lips.

But almost instantly his face lighted with joy.

At that moment the outlaws and their fair prisoner appeared, and the boy quickly pulled the gun Charlie had provided him with.

Wild saw the canoe as it swung around with the swift current.

He nerved himself for the task before him.

But just as he was about to open fire on the villains the tree gave way and down he went with it!

Horror upon horrors! It seemed that after all the young deadshot was fated to meet a violent death.

But not so.

He looked sharply at the canoe as he was descending, and when he saw the tree strike it and heard the crash as the canoe was splintered to pieces, he figured that his chance of saving his sweetheart was still good.

Then down he went beneath the water.

Wild could swim as well as the best of them, and quickly he forged to the surface.

Then almost the first object he saw was a mass of golden hair almost within his reach.

An instant later the face of Arietta appeared.

She, too, was swimming, doing her best to reach the nearest bank.

The roaring of the stream was quite loud, but not loud enough to prevent Wild from making himself heard.

"Hurrah, hurrah!" he shouted. "Are you all right, Et?"

"Oh, Wild!" the girl answered, and then she very nearly swooned, and almost sank beneath the surface.

But a couple of lusty strokes and the boy had her by the arm.

Then he quickly reached a ledge of rock which was almost even with the water on the very side he had dropped from.

"A lucky drop, little girl," he said, as he pulled the girl from the water. "I never expected to meet you in this sort of fashion."

But Arietta was too overcome to answer.

Her eyes closed and her head fell back upon his arm.

Wild knew she was all right, however, so he looked to see what had happened to the three men in the canoe.

One of them was swimming for the opposite shore, but the other two were nowhere to be seen.

Further down the stream a portion of the canoe could be seen whirling along, and then Wild knew it must have been broken squarely in two.

Having lost his revolver, Wild had no chance of forcing the man to surrender.

But he called out to him, anyhow.

"Say," he shouted, "you come here and give yourself up. I reckon you have gone the full length of your rope."

"Young Wild West!" came the startled cry from the outlaw, and then he actually threw up his hands and sank beneath the water.

When Wild found that he did not rise he was amazed.

"I wonder if he lost the power of his muscles at seeing me alive, when he thought I was surely dead?" he asked himself.

Then he looked on down the stream, but the man failed to appear.

Arietta opened her eyes just then and smiled faintly.

"Oh, Wild," she declared, "I'm so glad!"

"So am I, little girl. It was an awful experience for both of us."

"I never expected to see you alive again," she declared.

"Hello, hello!"

A shout came from above them, and looking up the two saw Charlie on a ledge that was a few feet under the crag the tree had broken from when it hurled Wild downward in his lucky drop that saved Arietta.

"We found a way to git out. Whoopie, whoopie! Wow wow, wow!" came from the scout. "We seen what happened when the blamed tree tore loose, Wild. We had jest got near enough an' was goin' to yell to you when down it went. You have got Arietta. That's good. I told Jim it couldn't happen any other way but what you would save her."

"I shall call that my lucky drop, Charlie, whenever I have occasion to speak of the occurrence," the young deadshot answered, in his cool and easy way.

"Jest you walk along up the stream a dozen yards an' you'll find a way to git up here. Me an' Jim was down there only a few minutes ago. Everything is all right now. We'll soon be back at the camp."

"Do you feel as if you can walk, little girl?" Wild asked Arietta.

"Oh, yes," was the reply. "I am quite myself now, Wild. I am sure that after I have swallowed a cup of hot coffee I will be as good as ever."

The boy half lifted her to her feet, and took the course the scout had spoken of.

Sure enough, he found a way to get up, and three minutes later both the young deadshot and his sweetheart were being congratulated by Charlie and Jim.

Up the rocky path they made their way, and after considerable exertion they reached the high ground.

Then it was comparatively easy to proceed to their camp, and as they were walking along Wild and Arietta told of all that had happened in the cave, while Charlie and Jim related their experience.

Great was the rejoicing of Anna and Eloise when the party arrived, and fifteen minutes later they were all sitting down to the breakfast that Wing had been preparing when those who had been away all night showed up.

"We have had a rousing old time of it, boys and girls," the young deadshot said, as he was eating his breakfast. "I can't say that I ever had quite such an experience before. It's the same with Arietta, and I reckon Charlie and Jim know a heap about hard luck, too. It's a good thing, Anna and Eloise, that you were not in it."

"A very good thing," came from Eloise, while Anna nodded and looked solemn.

"It was Wild's lucky drop, though," Arietta declared, and then she laughed in her girlish way, and from that time until the breakfast was finished they were a very jolly party.

Just as Wild was thinking of breaking camp and starting for Liberty Bend with their prisoner, the clatter of hoofs sounded above on the trail, and then as many as a dozen horsemen suddenly appeared.

One of them was the driver of the stage-coach they had saved from the outlaws the day before, and he promptly let out a yell as he waved his hat and came riding down the hill.

"Here they are, sheriff!" the driver exclaimed. "Here's Young Wild West an' his pards. They'll git the Mountain Outlaws, all right, an' don't you forgit it."

Sure enough, one of the men was the sheriff, and as he rode up and saw the prisoner tied to the tree he showed astonishment.

"Are you the sheriff?" Wild asked, in his cool and easy way.

"Yes, Young Wild West," was the reply.

"Well, here is Dan Hubbard. Please take charge of him. The rest of the gang are all dead."

The newcomers did not say a word but looked around in a way that showed how puzzled they were.

However, it did not take Wild long to convince them all that what he had said was the truth, and the result was that Dan Hubbard was duly taken charge of, and that very day Wild received the advertised reward.

That ended one of the most remarkable adventures the young deadshot and his companions had ever participated in, but they were destined to have many more, as the sequel will prove.

Next week's issue will contain "YOUNG WILD WEST'S WILD WEST SHOW; OR, CAUGHT IN THE EUROPEAN WAR."

SEND POSTAL FOR OUR FREE CATALOGUE.

CURRENT NEWS

The largest catch of big game ever made was accomplished near Buttonwillow, Cal. George S. Palmer, head cattleman for Miller & Lux, sprung the great trap and caught 150 elks. At a signal fifty vaqueros closed in behind nearly the last of the thousands in the San Joaquin. Dr. Evermann, director of the California Academy of Sciences, will distribute the elks to parks in the State."

Uncle John Brady exhibited a freak of nature in Yellville, Ark. He located a bee tree on Tar Kiln, near Pyatt, and the tree, which was dead, fell down. He had a section of the tree, about six feet long, containing the bees and the honey, cut out, and a few inches below where the section was sawed off was found a large red-headed lizard, eight inches long, which had petrified. The lizard was evidently in the tree when the bees took refuge there, and was unable to make its escape and died, after which petrification ensued.

Ike Judson, Waukesha County's famous recluse, has been returned to the County Poor Farm, neighbors having made complaints that his shack was unsanitary and that the old man would probably freeze to death or die of starvation if permitted to remain where he was. Two years ago he was committed to the Poor Farm, but ran away and returned to a shack on his property of thirty or forty acres, less than a mile northwest of the city. He was not disturbed during the summer. Mr. Judson claims to be seventy-four, but is believed to be nearer eighty-five.

Jackson, Miss., has an aristocratic negro beggar, who scorns pennies and declines to accept anything in the coin line that is less than a five-cent piece. Even the war in Europe and the tightness of money in America have not changed his attitude. Thinking to do the old negro, who sits next the corner of East Capitol and Congress streets, a favor, a citizen picked up from the sidewalk three pennies that he thought the negro had carelessly dropped. What was the surprise of the kind-hearted citizen to learn from a beggar that little things like pennies he threw away. "Fellow that drops into my cup just like a penny is a cheap skate," remarked the seeker of alms.

Thousands of dollars are lost annually by dairymen through the non-return of milk bottles left with patrons, according to statistics compiled by the Department of Agriculture, says Popular Mechanics. In one city alone in the space of three years 1,500,000 bottles were rescued from municipal dumps by a milk bottle clearing house. The average bottle, it is claimed, makes 22½ trips before it is lost, which, at a price of 3½ cents per bottle, would mean a yearly loss of \$5,575 to the dairyman delivering milk to 10,000 customers a day. It is contended that in reality only a few of the bottles are broken, the greater number of them being thrown into ash barrels by persons ignorant of their value.

Great claims are being made for a new coal mining machine which is being given an experimental test in one of the mines in the western part of Pennsylvania. The new machine rests on a steering truck which runs on the floor of the mine. It carries motors for operating cutting tools, and can attack the coal seams in any position, moving up or down, sideways or in any direction the coal seam leads. It also removes the roof slate when necessary. Electricity and compressed air can be used in operating the motors, and so little power is required that the cost for this item alone is said to be less than one cent a ton of coal mined. According to one estimate the machine will cut in two the cost of mining coal.

All the joy of existence burst at once into the life of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph McGinley, of La Crosse, Wis., when they received word that Mrs. Cynthia Heil, a wealthy aunt, had died at Albion, Ind., and left them \$25,000. Mrs. McGinley was alone when the message came. Her husband was bringing a load of hay to the market here. She paused from her work and took time to think. "It was pretty hard to think, too," said Mrs. McGinley, "when I realized that I could buy this farm which my husband and I have been striving for a year and a half to pay rent on, and besides, have a few of the pleasures which we never knew." Mrs. McGinley will leave for Albion, Ind., to claim her part of the estate, the total value of which is said to be nearly \$1,000,000.

The most powerful car ferryboat in the world is being built for the Florida East Coast Railway. In constructing his road through to Key West it was the dream of Henry M. Flagler to establish a freight service direct between the United States and Cuba. To do this it is necessary to transfer the loaded freight cars from Key West to Havana. As there is a strip of ninety-six miles of ocean between the end of the railroad and Havana, the only possible way is by means of a ferry line. The first boat of the kind has a capacity of thirty of the largest freight cars loaded and will make the trip between Key West and Cuba in eight hours. It is 350 feet long and 57 feet wide. The hull is built of steel. The cars are to be carried on the main deck, which is fitted with four railroad tracks. The stern of the vessel is of such shape as to fit neatly in the docks provided at Key West and Havana, whereby the cars are loaded onto the vessel at the stern. Every appliance has been fitted for the securing of the cars at sea. When the cars are stowed, their weight is taken upon jacks fitted to jack rails, thus relieving the trucks from the surge and weight due to the rolling of the ship in a seaway. The officials of the East Coast Railroad, in their desire to honor the memory of the genius who created the line, have named the boat the "Henry M. Flagler," just as after his death they called the road he had built the Flagler system, which, in his modesty, he would never permit while he lived.

THE MOUNTAIN QUEEN

— OR —

THE FAIR BANDIT

By "PAWNEE JACK"

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER I.

THE MEETING BETWEEN BORDER EAGLE AND STAR EYES.

"Why does he keep me waiting so long when he should have been here an hour ago? Does he think because I have given my heart to him that I will be patient forever? Star Eyes is not one with whom it is safe to trifle, and the handsome pale-face shall soon know it. The sun was high in the heavens when I reached the forest. Now, its dying rays are turning the waters of the stream to waves of blood. I will wait no longer. Let Border Eagle seek some other maiden who will wait for him until the moon comes forth. Star Eyes will not wait for him."

And the speaker, a beautiful young Indian girl, turned away from the trysting place where she had been waiting for her lover, and walked proudly in the direction of the clearing. But scarce had she taken a dozen steps, ere a tall, stalwart form came bounding through the woods while a low voice called to her:

"Star Eyes, Star Eyes, whither away. Were you not here to see me?"

At the sound of that familiar, well-beloved voice, the maiden paused, the haughty manner so lately assumed giving place to expectation, while into the proud dark eyes there crept a gleam of tenderness. Still she did not turn her head to look at the one she longed to see.

He came close beside her, saying in a tender, caressing voice:

"Ah, Star Eyes, surely you are not angry with me because I am somewhat late. Believe me when I say that I could not get here before. I am sorry, but it was not my fault. I had business I found it impossible to leave."

"Border Eagle should never find it impossible to leave any business when he knows that Star Eyes awaits him," the Indian maiden answered, proudly, yet with a faint smile beginning to curve her full red lips. "Star Eyes has never yet been forced to wait for any one until she waited for the pale-face, and she will never wait again. If Border Eagle cares more for——"

"Star Eyes knows better than that," the young hunter interrupted, putting his arm about the maiden's waist and drawing her to him. "She knows full well that she alone possesses my heart, and until I die I shall care for none other. Have I not told her so often enough?"

"Yes, the pale-face has sworn time and time again that his love shall belong to Star Eyes while life is his," she

replied, her dusky eyes growing soft and dim: "but words do not always prove everything. Actions are what we depend upon."

"Then tell me what to do in order to satisfy you that I care for you only, Star Eyes?" and Border Eagle's handsome face was very eager, as he bent over the maiden. "I will face any foe, brave any danger for your sake. Only bid me do what you wish, and you shall soon see whether I am loyal to you or not. Ah, Star Eyes, you know you are wronging me when you doubt me."

She turned to him, her lips trembling.

"Star Eyes does not doubt you, Border Eagle," she murmured, her dusky bosom rising and falling. "She was only trying you. She believes in you as she believes in heaven. She knows you are true and loyal, but you must not keep her waiting again. Then, too, Black Wolf has said to her that your heart is very tender toward the pale-face maiden who dwells with her father in the valley. She has much gold and many jewels, but," throwing her head back proudly, "she is not an Indian princess, and she is no fairer than Star Eyes. And if my pale-face lover thinks to win my heart and then cast it aside as he would a broken toy, he shall soon find that my hands are firm and steady, and an arrow sent from my bow never fails to reach its mark. Border Eagle cannot trifle with Star Eyes."

The young hunter laughed softly.

"Star Eyes must not let her fancies run away with her reason," he said, laying one hand kindly upon the glossy black hair. "She knows only too well the nature of the one to whom she has given her heart, and Black Wolf has told her many falsehoods, because he, too, wishes to wed her, and he will do all in his power to turn her against the one who is both true and faithful. He is rightly named, for he is indeed a wolf in the form of a man, and a treacherous wolf at that."

"And yet he is a great chief," she answered, a spirit of coquetry seeming to enter her heart. "Many maidens would deem it an honor if he asked for their hand, but Star Eyes hates him," stamping her tiny moccasined foot, while her eyes flashed dangerously. "She hates him worse than she hates the wild beasts that prowl through the forests, or the snakes that hide in the grass. Whenever she looks upon his face, her blood runs cold within her veins. Gray Hawk, her father, says she shall wed him, but she will leap from the highest cliff into the river before she

will be his bride. She has given her heart to the pale-face, and where her heart is her hand shall go."

"He shall never claim Star Eyes for his bride," Border Eagle said, drawing his tall figure up to its full height. And then for a few moments silence reigned unbroken, save for the sigh of the summer wind among the green trees, or the swiftly flowing waters of the river as they rippled past on their shining way. It was very still there in the dim, shadowy forest, the huge old trees waving their limbs gravely to and fro, the leaves rustling softly. At a short distance the river ran, and beyond, the purple mountains towered up majestic and grand, their misty summits seeming to meet the fair blue sky. Neither the beautiful dusky maiden nor her lover felt like breaking that strange, mystic stillness, there alone in the heart of nature, and their lips were mute, yet their hearts were filled to overflowing.

She spoke first. Her dark eyes soft and misty as the timid, fleet-footed fawn that bounds through the leafy woods sought his face, while her voice was low and hushed.

"Black Wolf has sworn to kill the pale-face if he ever finds him with Star Eyes," she said, slowly, "and he has never yet broken his oath. He has a heart of iron, his eye is keen as the eagle who wings his flight o'er yon tall mountain, and his hand is sure and firm. Black Wolf never sent an arrow flying through the air, but what it reached the mark it was intended for, and this time he means that mark to be the heart of Star Eyes' handsome pale-faced lover."

A scornful laugh burst from the young hunter's lips.

"And does Star Eyes think that Border Eagle fears this cowardly Black Wolf?" he asked proudly, his eyes flashing, his nostrils dilating. "Does she think for a single moment that he stands in terror of the red man who would not hesitate to send an arrow into his breast if he were unseen. Black Wolf is a coward, he should by right be a squaw, for he is not a warrior in spite of his boasting, and if he will meet Border Eagle face to face, man to man, he shall soon learn who is the better man. It is very well to boast of being a great chief, but the next thing is to prove it. I say now what I have always said, Black Wolf is a cowardly hound, and I——"

Before he had time to finish the sentence there was a rustle in the undergrowth behind him, and as he wheeled sharply, letting the maiden slip from his embrace, he found himself face to face with a scowling, painted Indian chief, whose hideous face was all the more repulsive because of the war paint and feathers, and his gaudy attire. There was a look in the snakish, beady black eyes which boded neither the young hunter nor the maiden any good, and both felt it, though Black Wolf, for it was he, had not yet spoken a single word.

In silence he stood, like a rigid, dusky statue, looking at Border Eagle, who defiantly returned his fiery glances, waiting for his enemy to utter the first word.

CHAPTER II.

THE TEST.

It was a strange, startling picture, framed there by the grand old trees of the woods, and one never to be forgotten. Save for the rush and roar of the busy river, and

the rustle of the green leaves as they were stirred by the gentle summer wind, profound silence reigned. The maiden did not move, but stood motionless, her beautiful face wearing an expression half fear, half defiance. Border Eagle grasped his trusty rifle in one hand, ready to send a bullet to the heart of the savage should he attempt any treachery, while all the hatred that burned like fire within the breast of Black Wolf was stamped upon his dusky face.

He was the first to speak. His black eyes flashed, and, drawing his stalwart figure up to its fullest height, he said slowly, yet with a meaning the young hunter could not understand:

"The pale-face is a coward and a sneaking cur. He has attempted to steal from Black Wolf the maiden who is his promised bride. But he shall answer to him for it.

Ere Border Eagle could answer him, the maiden stamped her tiny foot and, pointing in the direction of the rushing river, said imperiously:

"Go! Black Wolf speaks falsely when he says that Star Eyes is his promised bride, for she is not. The pale-face whom she loves is not a coward. He is a brave warrior, and it is Black Wolf himself who is the coward!"

The Indian chief's eyes flashed dangerously as he listened to her words, and his fingers tightened their hold about the bow and arrow he grasped.

"Star Eyes will yet be sorry for the words she has just spoken," he said gravely, and with a menace in his tones, while the light glowing in his black eyes was not good to see. "She has been promised to Black Wolf by her noble father, Gray Hawk. Many moons ago he gave her hand to him, saying she should soon be his bride, and if Star Eyes has been foolish enough to care for this pale-face stranger who is not one of her own people, then she must learn to forget him, for Gray Hawk has given his word that she shall be the bride of Black Wolf, and he never breaks an oath. Rather than see her wed Border Eagle he will take her life. One so fair as Star Eyes should only wed one of her own race, not a hated pale-face. Star Eyes must now go with Black Wolf back to her father's lodge. Before another moon she must become the bride of the Indian chief, Black Wolf."

"I will not go with you to my father's lodge, Black Wolf," the maiden replied, again stamping her foot in anger; "neither will I become your bride when my heart belongs to another. Star Eyes has given her whole heart and soul to the handsome pale-face who is so brave, so fearless. She will never love another—she will never wed another. Return to the lodge of Gray Hawk, my father, and say to him that I refuse to obey him. Say to him that Star Eyes is an Indian princess, and as such she obeys no command. She loves Border Eagle. She will take him by the hand, and together they will wander forth in a new land—a land where there is peace and plenty, where no war and bloodshed mar its beauty, and Black Wolf must be content with some other maiden. My life belongs to my pale-face lover; his ways shall be my ways, his people my people, and together we shall dwell in happiness until the Great Spirit summons us to a better land. Now what has Black Wolf to say to Star Eyes?"

(To be continued)

ITEMS OF INTEREST

AUTO HORN BRINGS HELP.

While answering a call Dr. A. W. Carnes, of Hutchins, Texas, was thrown over a twelve-foot embankment and pinned under a heavy automobile which had plunged over the bank. Dr. Carnes stated that his automobile horn was all that saved his life. According to his account he was driving along the road when he stopped to pick up a package which had dropped from the seat to the floor of the car. As he did so he must have turned the wheel with his right hand. After the crash he found himself under the car in a manner impossible to get out, and he consequently called for assistance with his horn until a farmer nearby responded and rescued him.

100-MILE SEARCHLIGHT.

The most powerful electric lamp in the world, visible under favorable conditions from a distance of more than 100 miles, has just been placed in service at the New York navy yard. If the tests satisfy the government, it is expected that this lamp will replace the searchlights now in use in the navy and in coast-defense work. It is equipped with a 44-inch reflector, and recent measurements have indicated a delivery of 450,000,000 cp. at a distance of two miles, while the searchlight now in use in the navy, equipped with a 44-inch reflector, gives only 60,000,000 cp. It is estimated that this lamp with a 60-inch reflector will give 1,000,000,000 cp. at a distance of two miles. The carbons are only $\frac{5}{8}$ inches in diameter, and are made with a metallic core. They are kept cool and prevented from vaporizing under the intense heat by means of a jet of gas which is played against the ends of the carbons.

EFFECT OF THE WAR ON OUR UNIVERSITIES.

An interesting criterion on the effect of the European war on our universities is afforded in a statement given out recently from the Chemistry Department at Columbia University. According to that department, a list of students who prior to the war had planned to go to Germany to study are now seeking information as to the courses afforded at home, and it is estimated that when the university opens, the registration at Columbia in all of its departments will be materially increased through the students who cannot pursue their studies abroad. One of the courses which is especially attracting those who had contemplated a winter at the German institutions is that afforded in Industrial Chemistry. The reason for this is sacrificing, educationally as well as economically, in the present war. She stood foremost in the production of chemical industries, and her universities offered courses in industrial chemistry which were the model of the world.

UNITED STATES MIGHT BE INVADED.

An invasion of this country at the present time is not looked upon as out of the question. A few years ago there was a popular belief that the United States had nothing

to fear from Europe, so long as the forts could withstand the attacks of the prospective enemy's fleets. The thousands of miles of ocean intervening between America and Europe was regarded as an absolute safeguard against invasion. Now, however, six-day ships capable of carrying thousands of soldiers and all the necessary equipment and supplies for them have reduced those thousands of miles materially. Any country that could control Canada or Mexico, or even force a landing along our coast, and could eliminate our navy—and there are several powers with larger navies than we have—could place an armed force of considerable strength on this continent within a comparatively short time. Canada is sending men at the rate of 10,000 at a time to England right now, and estimates of the first installment of the Canadian army sent for service in Europe have run as high as 30,000 men. It is conceivable that a much larger army could be sent to the United States. It might take a month for the actual transportation, slowing down a large fleet to the speed of the slowest vessel, but a month is not such a long time, hardly more than would be required in the mobilization of a large army here, and, if what Representative Gardner recently said is correct, we might experience considerable difficulty in combating an army of invasion.

CYCLE RIDERS' EARNINGS.

According to the announcement of E. de B. Newman, secretary of the Cycle Racing Association, \$85,873.18 has been paid out to cycle racers during the past outdoor season. The figures will probably reach \$100,000 when the riders collect for their services in the six-day race at Madison Square Garden. Frank L. Kramer, the American champion, is shown to be the highest paid of the riders, for he drew down \$10,511 for his end of the money.

Walter Rutt, the German rider, was second, with \$5,976 to his credit, while Alfred Goulet, the Australian, was third, earning as much as \$5,122.

Among the pace followers, Bobby Walthour was the heaviest winner, his earnings being \$2,740, while George Wiley was next, with \$2,410, and Clarence Carmen third, with \$2,266. Charles Turville, the motor pacemaker, received \$2,055, while Charley Stein, the Brooklynite, who proved himself so good at the pacemaking game that dissension over his services by the pace followers drove him out of that style of riding, made only \$836.55.

Other riders who earned more than \$1,000 at the games are: A. Jackie Clark, Australia; Alfred Grenda, Australia; Cesar Moretti, Italy; Joseph Fogler, Brooklyn; James F. Moran, Boston; Percy O. Lawrence, San Francisco; Robert Spears, Australia; Elmer Collins, Boston; Menus Bedell, Lyndhurst; Leon Didier, France; Frank Cavanagh, Newark; Iver Lawson, Salt Lake City; Peter Drobach, Boston; Worth L. Mitten, Davenport, Iowa; Freddy Hill, Boston; George Cameron, New York, and William Bailey, England.

DICKERING DICK

—OR—

THE LUCKY BOY TRADER

By DICK ELLSION

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER I.

YOUNG DICK DOUBLEDAY.

Dick Doubleday was the son of a poor widow in Danbury, whose father had been dead about a year before the opening of this story.

He was about sixteen years of age. His mother, when about twenty years old, married Tom Doubleday very much against the wishes of her parents.

Doubleday was a roistering, happy-go-lucky fellow, who captivated many of the young girls of the village, for he was a handsome young chap, a fluent, plausible talker, but withal a ne'er do well.

He gave the parents of several pretty marriageable young girls a great deal of uneasiness. They were afraid he would run away with some one of them, and they spent a great deal of time telling their daughters of things to his discredit.

He had been engaged in many escapades, but never did anything contrary to law. They believed that he was lacking in the stamina necessary to earn a good living for a wife and family, and their estimate of him was not far wrong; but for all of that, pretty Clara Morris ran away with, and married him. Her father was a stern, old deacon, who had accumulated a pretty property by hard work, and rigid exercise of economy. He utterly refused to have anything to do with his son-in-law. His daughter, though, was permitted to visit her old home whenever she felt inclined to do so. She was a pet of her parents, but with all her pleadings she could never succeed in softening their hearts towards her husband. She always protested that she was happy with him; that he was kind to her, although unable to provide her with anything but a very poor living.

They lived in a little cottage, the rent of which was very moderate; yet, at times, he was barely able to pay it.

About a year after their marriage a son was born to them, and the young mother was very happy. The little boy grew and thrived finely, but when he began to run about with other boys, it was found that he inherited many of the qualities of his father, for he was as full of mischief as the average dog of fleas. He was disposed to be very quick-witted, a fluent talker, like his father.

His mother kept him steadily at school, and as he was gifted with a good memory, he learned rapidly, and by the time he was fifteen years old, he was considered one of the brightest pupils in the public school.

He was a great comfort to his mother, and his grandmother was very fond of him, but she couldn't keep him out of mischief.

One day his father came home with a chill, fever followed, and inside of a week he died.

Old Deacon Morris was obdurate to the very last. He refused to attend the funeral, nor would he contribute a penny towards the expense incurred by his illness and burial.

The young widow was broken-hearted, for though her husband had been an extremely poor provider, he was always kind to her, and she loved him devotedly.

Neighbors were much kinder to her than her own father. The old man would shake his head, and remark:

"I warned her against it. I told her what sort of a life he would lead her if she married him, but she took the bit in her own mouth, ran away, and married him, and she has been paying the penalty of her disobedience ever since. I don't believe that it is right for me to interfere with the dealings of Providence, who has been punishing her ever since. I suppose people think I ought to take her and her brat and care for them; but I don't think that it is obligatory upon me to do so."

He was severely criticised by many of his neighbors who were members of his church, in which he officiated as deacon, but he cared little for that.

"Dick," the mother said to her son a few days after the funeral, "you will have to leave school now and find employment, for we've got to pay house rent, or be deprived of a roof over our heads, for your grandfather will do nothing for us."

"All right, mother. I'm not afraid of work. I don't care a snap for grandpop's money; don't ask any odds of him. He always was a mean old man. Papa was a better man than he ever dared to be."

"Richard," she called to him sternly, "you must not speak disrespectfully of your grandfather."

"Well, I don't mean to, mother, but my father was as good a man as he is. Everybody liked him, and he was good to you and to me. He was not a money-maker, but whatever he did earn he gave freely to you, and some day I'll make grandpop ashamed of himself. He's the only man in Danbury who ever spoke hard things about father."

Mrs. Doubleday burst into tears, as she thought of the many happy days she had spent in the little cottage with

her husband, who, under all circumstances, was always loving and affectionate.

The widow's mother, though, with the heart of a true woman, almost daily slipped supplies of food to her, unknown to the old deacon.

Dick stopped going to school and immediately began searching for employment.

He went to every store in the town, every workshop, and offered his services at any price.

All he wanted was work; something to do by which he could help his widowed mother, but like it is in hundreds of small towns there was very little demand for an inexperienced youth; hence he met with refusals everywhere he applied.

One man, a carpenter, offered to take him as an apprentice, teach him his trade and board him, but could pay him no wages until after a year's apprenticeship. Then he would pay him a hundred dollars a year, and two hundred the next year.

"That won't do," said Dick. "I've got to earn money right away, for we have rent to pay and food to buy."

"Well, I can't afford to pay you any wages the first year, except your board, which is worth eight or ten dollars a month."

"That's all right," said Dick. "If I didn't have a mother to take care of I'd accept your offer for the sake of learning the trade. I won't leave mother to take care of herself."

"I don't blame you, Dick," said the kind-hearted carpenter. "It's hard, but it's the best I can do. Why don't your grandfather take her back home and care for her while you are learning a trade?"

"Oh, he's a deacon, and is too good to do anything to help anybody," was his reply. "He's so good that he is afraid to do good to anybody else."

The carpenter repeated his remarks, and inside of a week the old man, his grandfather, heard of it.

It set a great many of his neighbors to laughing at him, and commenting on the boy's estimate of his old grandfather.

It stung the old deacon to the quick, and all the hatred that he had borne Tom Doubleday was at once transferred to his son Dick.

When his mother heard of it she scolded him severely about it.

"Yes, I did say it, mother, but it didn't strike me at the time how badly it sounded; but, hang him, every word of it is true."

"Now, Dick," she said, "don't you ever say a word against your grandfather again. Even though he may be cruel to us, you must not forget that he is my father, and you should be dutiful and respectful towards him at all times."

"All right, mother. I'll try to remember it."

After a week of fruitless search for employment of some kind Dick became very much disheartened. Naturally he was of a very buoyant turn of mind, always looking on the bright side of things, full of hope and energy.

"Mother," said he, "to save my life I can't find anything to do in Dunbury. It is the dullest place on the

top side of the globe. I guess I'll have to go out into the country and hire to some of the farmers."

"Why, what in the world can you do on a farm, Dick?"

"I don't know. I can do whatever they tell me to do. I can use a hoe all right, and I can pull fodder and cut wood, draw water and feed the stock."

"Yes," she replied; "and be a slave for the whole family. They just work a boy to death on a farm, give him little to eat, and he gets very small pay. You couldn't make a dollar a week out of it," and the disheartened mother burst into tears and said she wished she could die.

"Well, I don't," and he threw his arms around her neck and kissed her all over her tear-stained face.

That night one of his schoolmates dropped in to see him, and to invite him out to play tag with the other boys in the moonlight.

He went out with him, and played with the boys until bedtime.

That night he heard that one of his schoolmates was in great trouble because his father had just told him that if he didn't give his dog away to some other boy he would give him a load of bird shot at short range.

The dog had acquired a habit of helping himself to hen fruit whenever the hen notified the family that it was ripe and in the nest. It happened that during the morning Dick had learned that a farmer's dog had been poisoned by chicken thieves, and had heard him say that until he could get another dog he would have to sit up of nights with his shotgun to guard his hen roost.

Instantly the thought flashed through Dick's mind that if he could get Jimmie Raines' dog he might sell him to the farmer; so early the next morning he waylaid Jimmie on his way to school.

"Look here, Jimmie, Tom Lane told me last night that your pop was threatening to shoot your dog for sucking eggs."

"Yes; and I've got to get rid of him, or he will be shot. I've caught many a rabbit with him, and I love him; but both pop and marm say that he must leave the lot, for he eats all the eggs the hens lay on the place."

"What's the matter with letting me have him?" Dick inquired.

"What'll you gimme for him, Dick?"

Dick thought for a while. He hadn't a penny in the world, but he did have a good pocket knife, which had belonged to his father.

"I'll tell you what I'll do, Jimmie," he finally said. "I'll swap you my pocket knife for him."

He produced the pocket knife, and seeing it had four blades in it, Jimmie said:

"All right; I'll do it," and the exchange was made.

Jimmie turned back, ran home, followed by Dick, and told his mother that Dick Doubleday would take Foxy, the dog, away.

"Well, I'm glad of it," said Jimmie's mother, who got a piece of small rope for them to tie around the dog's neck.

"Now, Dick," said Mrs. Raines, "you must keep him tied up for two or three weeks and feed him well. If you don't he'll come back here the first time he gets loose."

(To be continued)

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168 West 23d Street

New York

Weighing two hundred and five pounds, Archie Shedden, of Loma Linda, Cal., was very seriously wounded when a shotgun he was placing in a wagon accidentally went off and tore a big gash across from his waist to his shoulder. Only the fact that he was exceedingly fat saved his life, the doctors said. The discharge of small shot tore across the surface and not one of the pellets entered the inner cavity, an X-ray examination disclosed.

Nearly all the important gold mines of Chosen are concessions given to foreigners by the former Korean government. Most of these are in the hands of Americans. Prior to the annexation in 1912 the annual output of precious metals was about \$2,500,000. It is now valued at about \$4,500,000. The most prosperous mines are at Unsan. They are managed by an American company and employ about 40 officials and 2,000 miners and laborers. There are also deposits of anthracite, iron, graphite and copper, but the major portion of present results come from the gold mines.

Over 15,000 college and school boy marksmen is the record for the school year which ended June 30, 1914. Through the combined efforts of the National Rifle Association of America and the National Board for the Promotion of Rifle Practice, rapid strides are being made looking to the introduction of rifle shooting as one of the recognized sports in the schools and colleges throughout the

country, and the movement has been still further stimulated by a recent act of Congress authorizing the free issue of rifles and ammunition to such clubs and to cadet corps. A feature of this work which is worthy of mention is the fact that there have been no serious accidents of any kind on rifle ranges since the work was introduced, a claim that could hardly hold good in connection with other prominent school sports such as football and baseball.

Mrs. Ralph Talbot, of Ten Mile township, Macon, Mo., was in the bed with her baby and her husband sleeping in an adjoining room when she dreamed of snakes, and the dream was so disturbing that she awoke. The lamp on the table threw a dim ray on the bed and lying near her and the baby on the cover was just such a reptile as she had seen in her dream. But she was a nervy little woman, and, assuring herself that it was only a dream, she reached over and touched the ugly thing. It moved! So did she; but she didn't cry out, and she had the presence of mind to seize the baby and take it with her. Mr. Talbot awoke and heard the story. He walked into his wife's bedroom and turned up the light. There was no snake to be seen. "It must have been a dream," he said. "Maybe," admitted Mrs. Talbot, "but I felt sure it moved when I touched it." Something was said about eating certain heavy food before retiring, when Mr. Talbot detected a slight movement of the cover. He pulled it off the bed and there lay a snake.

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GOOD CURRENT NEWS ARTICLES

Fifteen tons of dead fish taken from a lake at Junction City, Kan., were hauled to an adjoining field and used as fertilizer. This is probably the first time in history that fish were used in such a novel manner. The fish in several lakes here were killed in a mysterious way, and their death is puzzling the State game warden.

Twelve years ago Charles Miller, deputy State fire marshal of Columbus, Ohio, while fishing at Lakeview, near Lima, lost a \$20 diamond-studded ring. He has recovered the ring in a local jewelry store. Floyd Walters, of Lakeview, while fishing, brought up the ring and, finding Mr. Miller's name engraved inside, turned it over to a jeweler for safekeeping. Mr. Miller identified the ring.

Wladek Zbyszko, the Polish wrestler, is out with a challenge to Frank Gotch, the present holder of the wrestling championship, through his manager, L. Kowalski. The challenger is willing to post a \$1,000 forfeit to bind the match. Gotch, while he is the holder of the title, has not made his appearance on the mat in some time, and Zbyszko believes he should either defend his championship or retire.

David Yinglin of Cumberland township, residing near Natural Dam, Pa., while driving along a road in that vicinity, was startled to see a large bald eagle swooping down toward him. The bird pounced upon Mr. Yinglin, lighting on his leg, and began tearing his flesh with its claws and making the attack more severe by piercing him with its beak. After fighting the eagle, he managed to get it under his feet, and with forceful stamping crushed the life out of his adversary.

Michael Angeli McGinnis, famous convict mathematician, who was born in Greenville, Wis., is dead in a Kansas City hospital, according to reports just received. Mr. McGinnis' ability at figures gained him an international reputation. While in the Missouri penitentiary at Jefferson City, where he was sent after his conviction for misuse of the mails when publishing a newspaper in Newton County, McGinnis wrote a book on algebra which attracted the attention of educators all over the world.

Dum-dum bullets take their name from the town of Dum-Dum in British India, where a British arsenal is located. Hollow-nosed bullets were early manufactured at the Dum-Dum foundry for the use of the British forces against Afghans and other wild native tribes. The usual type of bullet failed to stop the mad charges of fanatical tribesmen and so the British saw fit to employ these terrible missiles against the savages. The Boers made strenuous complaint that the British were employing these bullets against them in the war of 1899. This the British have always denied, and in turn insisted that soft-nosed bullets were used by the Boers. To a certain extent the Boers used sporting ammunition and many sporting bullets are of the soft-nosed type. The Japanese charged that the Russians used dum-dum bullets in 1904-1905.

GRINS AND CHUCKLES

Crawford—How is it you let your wife have her own way? Crabshaw—I once tried to stop her.

Teacher—What is the difference between "I will hire a taxi, and I have hired a taxi"? Kid—About six dollars and a half.

He (after a quarrel, bitterly)—I was a fool when I married you. She (quietly, about to leave the room)—Yes; but I thought you would improve.

Husband—Are you aware, my dear, that it takes three-fourths of my salary to meet your dressmaker's bills? Wife—Good gracious! What do you do with the rest of your money?

Schoolmaster (at end of object lesson)—Now, can any of you tell me what is water? Small and Grubby Urchin—Please, teacher, water's what turns black when you put your hands in it!

"You should have been in the suffragette parade, my dear." "So?" "It was delightfully dangerous. Many of the girls were annoyed by horrid men." "Indeed." "For the first time in their lives."

A three-year-old tot was taken to the Zoo to see the animals. When the nurse brought her home her mamma said: "Darling, did you see the big tiger in his cage?" "Yeth," lisped the little one. "We dest looked at him—we didn't go in."

"Really, Elizabeth," declared Mr. Spendaghost, the father of a large family of girls, "we must economize. We must husband our resources." "Husband our resources!" replied Mrs. S. "It strikes me, Mr. Spendaghost, you'd better husband your daughters."

"Sir," said the office boy to his employer, "as you know very well that my family is in perfect health, I ask you to let me off this afternoon to go to the ball game." "Young man," replied the boss, "you are entirely too honest. I have my suspicions of you. You are fired."

BERT'S GRIT.

By Kit Clyde.

The yellow, rolling plains stretched far to the West like a dreary, frozen sea. The sun, riding through the heavens in his flaming chariot, beat down with relentless fervor on the little party of emigrants, wearily toiling over the sandy plains.

For weeks they had been plodding along under a broiling sun, with scarcely the shadow of a cloud, or the shade of tree or great rock to afford them a resting-place in this weary land, and day after day this dreary march had gone on without an incident to break its monotony.

This afternoon it seemed as though the climax to their discomfort had been reached. The heat was intense, the dust was blinding, and filled mouth and nostril; the great "prairie schooner" pitched and rolled as heavily as a vessel in a choppy sea. The men, women and children wore a fatigued, dejected look that told plainer than any words how painfully this long, terrible journey was wearing on mind and body.

"Do you see," suddenly asked the guide of the train-leader, Major Merton—"do you see that small, dark object far ahead on the plains? I have been trying for a long time to make out what it is, but can't tell. Can you?"

Major Merton gazed long and earnestly in the direction indicated. At length he said, slowly:

"Guide, do you know what I think it looks like?"

"No. What?" said the other, concisely.

"A boy."

"A boy!" laughed the guide scoffingly. "A boy alone on the plains! Many a strange thing have I seen on these sands, but a boy alone I never saw, and never expect to see."

Nevertheless, as the train drew close to the object, it was seen to be a lad, who glanced up frankly into the astonished faces of the trainmen as they gathered about him.

A lad of thirteen; lithe and supple as a panther's young—slender, yet the mold and carriage of the boyish figure was perfect. Shining waves of chestnut crowned the proud young head, and long, silken lashes of the same color guarded eyes of such intense flashing gray that they made one think of flame. The bronze of the desert sun had deepened the tint of his cheeks, and the flush of health glowed on the crimson lips.

"Hello, youngster! What's the trouble—got lost from your train?" were the amazed guide's first words.

"No trouble, sir. Here's my train," laughed the boy in answer.

"Train! Just hear the lad! Look at his kit, boys, if you want evidence of his grit."

It consisted of a child's carriage, in which was crowded a sack of hard-tack, some salt pork, a little bag of coffee, a few utensils for cooking purposes, and a blanket.

"But what's your name, my lad? And how does it happen you are pushing a baby-carriage across the plains alone?" questioned Major Merton, in bewildered astonishment.

"My name is Bertram Wheeler. I'm called Bert for

short. I wanted to cross the plains to seek my fortune in the mines, for there's no one in the world to care for me. There wasn't any train ready to start when I was, so I just bought this little carriage, packed some food into it, and started on my own hook. I have got along pretty well, though I feel a bit tired at night," answered the boy, concisely and nonchalantly. But somehow a tired ring in his voice bore witness to the experienced plainsman of blistered, weary hands and feet, of an aching frame, and of a heroic, boyish soul, whose courage had been tested to the utmost over and over again.

"But, my boy, were you not reckless to start on this dangerous journey? You surely did not stop to think of the peril by the way," said Major Merton, questioningly.

"I counted the cost, sir, and resolved to go. I am just as safe in one place as another, since the Deity is everywhere," was the trustful answer.

A mist sprang into Major Merton's eyes at this simple explanation of so much daring and dauntless courage on the part of one so young; but just then he felt little velvety fingers closed around his hand, and looking down, he beheld at his feet his little daughter, a little dimpled-faced baby girl, with long, fair hair floating back from the sweet child's face, like the billows in a field of ripe wheat. He lifted her in his arms, and said gayly:

"Well, Bessie, what is it?"

"Please, papa," said the little maiden, softly, "I want that carriage to ride in."

"But I am sorry to say, my blossom, you cannot have it. It belongs to this boy, and he can't do without it."

"Oh, papa," coaxed the child, "I must have it. I am so tired of that big old jolty wagon, and I do want to ride in this cunning little one. Do let me have it."

"Hush, Bessie! Didn't I tell you that it belongs to this boy?"

The little girl said nothing, but put her little soft hands on each side of his face, and then gazed steadily at him with large, pathetic violet eyes, in which was a wordless entreaty and slow-coming tears, which made them resemble limpid lakes in their starry luster, and finally overflowing, rolled down over the woeful little face.

This sort of an argument completely vanquished the major, and turning towards Bert, he said hastily:

"Bert, let's make a bargain. Put your outfit in my wagon, make one of our number to the journey's end, and let my little girl have your baby-wagon. Do you agree?"

A look of intense relief flashed over the boy's tired face, but he said nothing, though his answer was expressive of his great gratitude. With flushed brow and slightly quivering lip, he walked directly up to Major Merton, who was still holding Bessie in his arms, and drawing down the child's blossomy face, kissed her sweet, red mouth. The major laughed.

"Bravo, my boy! I see you are willing," he said, blithely.

What a relief it was to get to the mountains, where an eternal peace seemed to rest on the everlasting hills, and silence sat on her echoless throne in the valleys; and where the snow-fed streams flashed in the sunlight and murmured through the night, their banks lined with willow and cotton wood, making a shimmering arcade.

There was neither road nor trail before them. For the first time since the mountains were piled up and the valleys hollowed out, the wheels of civilization were grating on the gravel, cutting into the sward, or ringing on the granite rocks that stubbornly refused to take an impression.

On and on went the train, over high mountains where the snow was within reach, through passes cleft in the heart of the hills, into grand valleys where the wagon-wheels crushed through beds of wild, sweet flowers, whose delicious odors filled the air; and yet amid all the indescribable beauty of this mountain scenery danger was lurking like a rattlesnake coiled in a clump of rose-laden bushes.

Down, "like the wolf on the fold," swooped the wild red-men of the mountains on the devoted little train, which was almost instantly "corraled." Every man was on the alert, and with rifle and revolver made ready to receive their bloodthirsty foes.

"Major Merton," said Bert, in a low, hushed tone, as the afternoon was drawing to a close, "don't you think that word could be got to Fort Fremont? It's only forty miles back on the trail."

The major shook his head.

"It would be certain death for any one to attempt to act as messenger, and besides, I cannot spare a man."

"Let a boy go, then. Let me go," was Bert's impetuous reply.

"Are you crazy, Bert Wheeler?" exclaimed the major. "What sort of a chance would you stand, do you think? It is going to be the darkest, stormiest night that ever hung upon the earth."

"So much the better," spoke up the boy, while his eyes glowed like points of flame. "The darkness and storm will hide me and drown the sound of Sultan's feet. There is a chance, and better anything than that Bessie's curls should hang at one of those redskin's belt."

The father's cheek paled through its bronze. Surely the last was a telling argument. And then, as Bert had said, there was a chance of slipping through that dangerous cordon of Indians, being aided by the darkness, the storm, and the wondrous fleetness of the major's famous black stallion, Sultan; and, too, there was no rider in all the train so expert as this supple-framed lad. So, after a little more urging from Bert, Major Merton gave his consent.

Down came the night gloomily, with no twilight. Soon after dark the storm burst. The waning moon did not rise until twelve, but had it been full, the dense rain-clouds veiling the mountains and filling the valley would have absorbed its every ray. The water swept downward through the canyons with an awful roaring and a giant's power. The rain poured down in great sheets, as though a second deluge had set in, and in the midst of all this tumult Bert Wheeler made ready to go.

It was the very night he had been praying for, and now or never was his chance. He kissed the soft cheeks of little Bessie, hastily shook hands with Major Merton, swung himself into the saddle, struck the magnificent, spirited horse sharply, causing him to leap the inclosure, and in a second was beyond the reach of aid from the corral, no

matter how sorely he might feel its need. To the last hour of his life Bert will never forget that wild, thrilling night ride. He had ridden but a short distance when something—it might have been an Indian guard—was spurned from his path by the grinding feet of his flying horse.

On and on, into the night, trusting wholly to the sagacity of his trusty steed that was taking the trail, which, fortunately, was not very rough, at an appalling pace, swept the dauntless young rider. The darkness of the Egyptian plague was about him, and the thunders of the storm filled his ears; yet a wild, exultant joy throbbed in every vein. Did not every swinging stride bring him nearer the help that should save his friends?

Ah-h! The horse is deep in a foaming torrent. Galantly he bore his burden to the opposite bank. A mighty shake and he is off again. And so the night wore on. The storm decreased in violence, and finally ceased as the grayness of dawn stole over the earth. Away curled the mists, disclosing to the boy's straining eyes his goal but a short distance away.

"Fort Fremont! Thank heavens!"

And, forty miles away, the emigrants looked up to the smiling heavens with eyes haggard with sleeplessness and despair. Would they ever see another dawning? Their souls, bereft of hope, shrank in themselves at the answer, already whispered to them by the destroying angel.

At last darkness enfolded them—a darkness braided with sparkling stars. In silence, with straining eyes and cocked rifles, the emigrants awaited the attack that was sure to come. They had not long to wait. Sinister shadows flitted hither and thither, silently, yet surely approaching the train.

"Heavens, man, hear that!" cried the guide to his neighbor.

A silvery bugle-blast echoed all over the country and up to the very mountain-tops in their great stillness, followed by the thunder of the hoofs of horses coming like wind.

"It's the sojers, major!" cried the excited old guide. "It's the sojers, and that blessed gritty youngster is a-leading 'em. Give them redskins brimstone; now, boys—give it to 'em!"

A short, sharp conflict followed, at the end of which the Indians were fleeing in utmost dismay, hotly pursued by the intrepid soldiers.

Then, and not till then, did our brave Bert's sorely-tried strength give way. Major Merton caught the exhausted, fainting boy as he reached from his saddle with a face white as the seal of death.

In a short time, however, Bert opened his eyes, and looking up into the major's face, exclaimed proudly, though weakly:

"Ain't you glad you let me go, Major Merton?"

"Glad! Of course he's glad, you little hero! But you may be sure you wouldn't have got his consent to go after them sojers, if he hadn't felt sure that you was just clear grit. Boys"—to the eager, thankful emigrants crowding forward to bless their dauntless young deliverer—"let's give three cheers for Bert's grit!"

And they were given with a right royal will.

NEWS OF THE DAY

A report from Rome states that owing to all steel material for ships under construction for the Italian navy being tied up in France and Germany, the United States is looked to for the needed material, and American steel plants have been approached with a view of securing the large tonnage required.

Trials of Argentine petroleum in one of the locomotives of the Port of Buenos Aires in the last two months have so well satisfied the authorities that it has been decided to use it in all the locomotives of the port. The test was made with Comodoro Rivadavia petroleum in a 250 h.p. locomotive where it showed economy over coal of 20 to 30 per cent.

A non-skid automobile tire of unusual design is being introduced by the Sirdar Rubber Company of London, England. The tire has a zig-zag line deeply cut into the tread, in which metallic studs are set so that their tops are flush with the tread. The tire is said to be very resilient, and yet as much a "non-skid" as if it were fitted with separate steel-studded cover.

While she was on her way to visit a sick neighbor, Mrs. Henry Neal, of Lone Rock, Ark., was attacked by three large black snakes which dropped on her from an overhanging bough as she passed under. James T. Adams, a traveling man, was attracted to the woman by her screams. When he arrived she had fainted and one of the reptiles was coiled about her throat, while the other two had her arms and legs pinioned. Adams cut the snakes in pieces with his pocketknife, revived Mrs. Neal, and carried her to the nearest house.

Although but little has been heard of the Zeppelins since the war began, no one seems to know whether their general absence from the field of activity indicates some unforeseen unfitness, or is an indication that they are being withheld with some particular purpose in the future. However that may be, it is a fact that these huge dreadnoughts of the air have not as yet lived up to their reputations. It is most probable, however, that the little aeroplane has so far met all of the requirements, and that the larger craft are being saved for other maneuvers.

George M. Hoover, former mayor and wealthy banker, Dodge City, Kan., who died recently, left more than \$100,000 to Dodge City, it was discovered when his will was opened. Hoover's wife died last spring. He had no children or near relatives. About \$50,000 was left to relatives in Canada and to friends here, and \$10,000 to build an auditorium for Dodge City, which has no theater or public meeting house. In addition, \$1,000 was left each of the six churches here. The rest of the estate is to be interest, and the income each year expended in localizing the city.

George Kreiger, of Grand Rapids, Mich., has completed a machine which will considerably lighten the work of the farmer. Digging potatoes was once one of the farmer's back-breaking tasks. That was in the old days when a fork was used. Now this is all changed. The Grand Rapids man's machine is drawn by a horse, digs the potatoes, cleans them and hoists them into the wagon. Another contrivance will sack the potatoes. The machine is operated by one man. All he has to do is to drive the horse.

One of the most important public works now being carried on by the Taiwan government is the improvement of the harbor at its principal port, Keelung, Formosa, at the extreme northern end of the island, through which passes more than half of the shipping. The new work includes large warehouses of steel and of reinforced concrete; a sea wall, for protection against the destructive typhoons, is to be lengthened some 14,000 feet; twenty-one mooring buoys are to be placed, and eight cranes of 1½ and 10 tons are to be added to the equipment. Improvements of the same general nature are also being carried on at Takao, Tansing and Tansui.

After traveling hundreds of miles to buy a Russian wolfhound, which he believed would rid his ranch of coyotes, C. R. Adams, of Toston, Mont., reported to the police that the dog, for which he paid \$500, was stolen while he was buying a collar for the animal at Second and Market streets, Philadelphia. A few hours later Detective Curran found the dog in a pet shop on Ninth street, above Market, and turned it over to the owner. Mr. Adams told the police that coyotes are causing all kinds of trouble to ranch owners in Montana, and that a bounty is paid to persons who kill the annoying animals. He read of a man living in Paulsboro, N. J., having a Russian wolfhound, and, knowing that this animal is feared by the coyotes, he decided to come East and purchase the dog. He left with the dog for his home.

It is well known that paper is singularly impermeable to cold. During the hard winter campaign of 1870 the officers of the Army of the Loire frequently wrapped themselves in newspapers when bivouacking in the open, and reported that, failing warm wool blankets, no better protection could be found. During the Russo-Japanese war, the Mikado's soldiers were provided with paper shirts. M. Laveran, of the French Academy of Sciences, has now come forward with the suggestion that the ministry of war lay in a stock of paper blankets. No precaution, he points out, should be overlooked, and the unusually chilly weather this fall would seem to indicate a cold winter. He adds that individual soldiers can make their own blankets by the simple process of stitching together several thicknesses of newspaper. A light coating of vaseline makes the paper watertight and more pliable.

INTERESTING ARTICLES

WAR PENSIONS FOR CANADA.

A grim reduction of the horrors of war to dollars and cents is afforded in the Canadian pension rates, recently announced.

A slightly incapacitated lieutenant-colonel receives \$600 a year, a slightly incapacitated private \$75 and the other ranks are graded between these two extremes.

Rates for "materially incapacitated" run from \$100 to \$900, and for "wholly incapacitated" from \$150 to \$1,200, according to rank.

And there are the pensions to widows, granted according to rank, as follows: No children, \$107.50 to \$547.50; one child, \$146 to \$730; two or more children, \$182.50 to \$912.50.

RECORD OF THE MAJOR LEAGUE CLUBS FOR THE SEASON.

Some interesting baseball information is found in the statistics compiled at the close of the season, covering the work of the sixteen clubs composing the National and American Leagues. Between April 14 and Oct. 7, 2,508 games were played—1,250 in the National League and 1,258 in the American. National League clubs scored 4,802 runs, 10,021 hits and 2,146 errors; American League clubs 4,596 runs, 10,020 hits, 2,148 errors, giving the senior association the advantage of one hit and two errors.

In the National League, the New York Giants made the most runs and Brooklyn the most hits, while Philadelphia and Cincinnati tied with the greatest number of errors. The Philadelphia Athletics led the American League with 749 runs and 1,381 hits, while making the lowest number of errors. Detroit was second in runs and hits, with the New York Yankees second lowest in errors made during the season.

FALL OF METEORIC FLOSS COVERS CALIFORNIA TOWN.

A remarkable fall from the heavens of large quantities of what is described as meteoric floss took place at Healdsburg. The shower, which began between 7 and 8 a. m., and reached its maximum about 10 o'clock, was seen by all the inhabitants of the town.

According to an eyewitness, the material appeared high in the heavens, in a clear sky, as a mass of stars, lustrous metallic sheets and silvery ropes. It reached the earth in various shapes and sizes, ranging from minute particles to sheets twenty feet square. It fell in such quantities that long ropes and masses of it hung from the telephone and telegraph wires.

When the substance reached the warm earth it began at once to contract into fibrous masses, resembling flossy asbestos, though tests proved that it was not that mineral. Most of it soon disappeared, though samples were saved and sent to Director Campbell of the Lick Observatory and to Prof. Tito Alippi, director of the observatory at Urbano, Italy.

WAR DEPARTMENT PLANS BIG RIFLE TOURNAMENT IN 1915.

According to a report recently issued by the War Department, 15,000 schoolboy and college marksmen took part in various rifle shooting competitions during the year which ended on June 30, 1914. The great increase in the popularity of this sport, as shown by the War Department's report, is due in a large measure to several years of hard work by the department and by the National Rifle Association of America, which are working to make shooting a recognized sport in schools and colleges.

The effort to increase the popularity of shooting as a sport has been aided by the recent act of Congress, which authorizes the free issue of rifles and ammunition to school and college shooting clubs. The War Department report on the subject shows that forty-two college clubs and eighty-eight private and public school clubs have availed themselves of this privilege.

Rifle shooting is now the only sport which is actively fostered and financed by the government. The War Department manages the tournaments held for the various classes of marksmen and provides trophies in the national competitions.

The War Department is making plans for a big rifle shoot for high school marksmen in 1915. Several of the high schools in New York have already taken up the sport and others will probably follow their lead.

BLIND MULE SAVES FIFTY MINERS.

An old blind mule saved the lives of fifty imprisoned miners, trapped 250 feet underground by the terrible cave-in in the American-Davy coal workings, Webb City, Missouri.

It was late in the afternoon and the day shift was about to leave, when, without warning, four acres of shaft and tunnel caved in with a terrific roar. The air, compressed by the falling tons of rock and wall and roof, blew down the galleries in tremendous gusts, actually throwing the miners about like feathers. Seven of them suffered broken bones and internal injuries.

All the lights were put out, and in the utter blackness the fifty trapped miners were lost and helpless. But their foreman managed to grope his way to a telephone which led to the surface, and fortunately found it working. Over it a voice from above told him that No. 7 shaft was still open to the surface.

But as the cave-in had torn great gaps in the floors and had broken up the intricate galleries into even worse confusion, the men could not find their way to the shaft.

It occurred to them to make their old track mule, Ben, their guide.

For years he had been as blind as they were now in the blackness, but he knew the galleries perfectly, by habit. One of the men held onto his harness and others followed, holding hands, and the mule guided them safely to the shaft.

FIFTE.



Also known as a Japanese butterfly. A pleasing novelty enclosed in an envelope. When the envelope is opened FIFTE will fly out through the air for several yards. Made of colored paper to represent a butterfly six inches wide. Price, 10c.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

X-RAY WONDER



This is a wonderful little optical illusion. In use, you apparently see the bones in your hand, the hole in a pipe-stem, the lead in a pencil, etc. The principle on which it is operated cannot be disclosed here, but it will afford no end of fun for any person who has one. Price, 15 cents each, by mail, postpaid.

FRANK SMITH, 383 Lenox Ave., N. Y.

GOOD LUCK BANKS.



Ornamental as well as useful. Made of highly nickeled brass. It holds just One Dollar. When filled it opens itself. Remains locked until refilled. Can be used as a watchcharm. Money refunded if not satisfied. Price, 10c. by mail.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

COMICAL FUNNY FACES.



This genuine laugh producer is made of nicely colored cardboard. A sharp, bent hook is at the back to attach it to the lapel of your coat. Hide one hand under the lapel and twitch the small, black thread. It will cause a red tongue to dart in and out of the mouth in the most comical manner imaginable at the word of command. It is very mystifying, and never fails to produce a hearty laugh.

Price, 6c. each by mail.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

GIANT SAW PUZZLE.



This puzzle contains twenty-one pieces of wood nicely finished; take them apart and put them together same as illustrated. Everybody would like to try it, as it is very fascinating. Price, by mail, postpaid, 25c. each.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

THE INK BLOT JOKER.

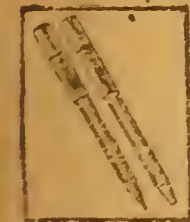


Fool Your Friends. —The greatest novelty of the age! Have a joke which makes everybody laugh. More fun than any other novelty that

has been shown in years. Place it on a desk, tablecloth, or any piece of furniture, as shown in the above cut, near some valuable papers, or on fine wearing apparel. Watch the result! Oh, Gee! Price, 15c. each, postpaid.

A. A. WARFORD, 16 Hart St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

SLIDE THE PENCIL.



The pencil that keeps them guessing. Made of wood and lead just like an ordinary pencil, but when your victim starts to write with it—presto! the lead disappears. It is so constructed that the slightest pressure on the paper makes the lead slide into the wood. Very funny and a practical joke.

Price, 10c. each by mail, postpaid; 3 for 25c. H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

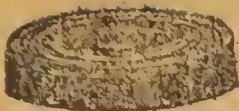
LIGHTNING TRICK BOX.



A startling and pleasing illusion! "The ways of the world are devious," says Matthew Arnold, but the ways of the Lightning Trick Box when properly handled are admitted to be puzzling and uncertain. You take off the lid and show your friends that it is full of nice candy. Replace the lid, when you can solemnly assure your friends that you can instantly empty the box in their presence without opening it; and taking off the lid again, sure enough the candy has disappeared. Or you can change the candy into a piece of money by following the directions sent with each box. This is the most and best cheap trick ever invented.

Price, only 10c.; 3 for 25c., mailed, postpaid. C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

DELUSION TRICK.



A magic little box in three parts that is very mystifying to those not in the trick. A coin placed on a piece of paper disappears by dropping a nickel ring around it from the magic box. Made of hard wood two inches in diameter. Price, 12c.

FRANK SMITH, 383 Lenox Ave., N. Y.

THE MAGIC NAIL.



A common nail is given for examination, and then instantly shown pierced through the finger; and yet, when taken out, the finger is found to be perfectly uninjured, and the nail is again given to be examined. Nicely finished.

Price, 10c. by mail, postpaid. H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

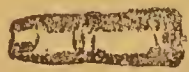
THE ELK HEAD PUZZLE.



Just out, and one of the most fascinating puzzles on the market. The stunt is to separate the antlers and rejoin them. It looks easy, but try it and you will admit that it is without exception the best puzzle you have ever seen. You can't leave it alone. Made of silvered metal.

Price, 12c.; 3 for 30c., sent by mail, postpaid. WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

THE FINGER THROUGH THE HAT.



Having borrowed a hat from your friend, push your finger through the crown of it, and it is seen to move about. Though very amusing to others, the owner of the hat does not see the joke, but thinks it means to destroy his hat; yet when it is returned it is perfectly uninjured. Price, 10c. each by mail.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

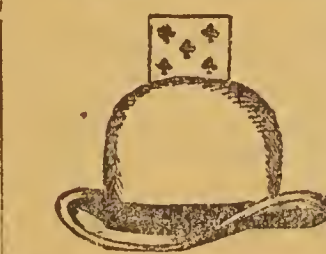
DEAD SHOT SQUIRT PISTOL.



If you shoot a man with this "gun" he will be too mad to accept the ancient excuse—"I didn't know it was loaded." It loads easily with a full charge of water, and taking aim, press the rubber bulb at the butt of the Pistol, when a small stream of water is squirted into his face. The best thing to do then is to pocket your gun and run. There are "loads of fun" in this wicked little joker, which looks like a real revolver, trigger, cock, chambers, barrel and all. Price only 7c.; 4 for 25c.; one dozen 60c. by mail postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

CARD THROUGH THE HAT TRICK



With this trick you borrow a hat, and apparently shove a card up through the crown, without injuring the card or hat. The operation can be reversed, the performer seemingly pushing the card down through the crown into the hat again. It is a trick which will puzzle and interest the closest observer and detection is almost impossible. It is so simple that a child can learn how to perform it in a few minutes.

Price 10 cents each, by mail, post-paid. H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

THE JOKER'S CIGAR.



The biggest sell of the season. A real cigar made of tobacco, but secreted in the center of cigar about one-half inch from end is a fountain of sparklets. The moment the fire reaches this fountain hundreds of sparks of fire burst forth in every direction, to the astonishment of the smoker. The fire is stage fire, and will not burn the skin or clothing. After the fireworks the victim can continue smoking the cigar to the end. Price, 10c.; 3 for 25c.; 1 dozen, 99c., mailed, postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

HOT AIR CARDS



There are 8 cards in a pack. They are nicely printed on good bristol-board, and contain the funniest literature ever composed, such as "Professor Huggem, hugging and kissing done in the very latest style," a Liar's License, a membership card for the Down and Out Club, and other comical poetry and prose. Every card guaranteed to make the girls giggle, the boys to laugh, and the old folks to roar. If you are looking for fun, get a pack.

Price 10 cents a pack, by mail, post-paid. WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

LOTS OF FUN



Ventriloquist Double Throat

Fits roof of mouth; always invisible; creates: thing yet. Astonish and mystify your friends. Neigh like a horse; whine like a puppy; sing like a canary, and imitate birds and beasts of the field and forest. Loads of fun. Wonderful invention. Thousands sold. Send 10c. and a 2c. stamp for one dozen.

DOUBLE THROAT CO., Dept. K, Franchtown, N. J.

NOVELTIES

Tricks, jokes, puzzles, magic. Illustrated catalogue free.

EXCELSIOR NOVELTY CO., Dept. C, Anderson Realty Bldg., Mount Vernon, N. Y.



EASY MONEY

Flash our "Millionaire's Bank Roll" and make 'em all "rubber." These goods are made in Washington and are dandies. Easy money hand them. Send 10c. for sample "wad." and Big Catalog. Address, McKINLEY CO., Dept. T, WINONA, MINN.

425 SONGS New and Old

Piano Music, Ballads, Big Fun Pack, ageful of Tricks, Puzzles, Jolly Jokes, Riddles, Money-making Secrets, Love Letters, How to Flirt, How to Charm Others, To Tell Fortunes, Great Dream Mysteries, Hypnotism, Ventriloquism, Dancing Instructions—latest steps and hundreds of curious things that will entertain and amuse the whole family all winter. This big illustrated entertainer will be sent postpaid for 10c., 3 for 25c. Rockwell Music Co., Dpt. AG, 325 Madison St., Chicago



A sample of my remedy has cured cases of Falling Sickness or Epilepsy. Prompt relief guaranteed. I PAY EXPRESSAGE on FREE TRIAL BOTTLE, if you cut out and RETURN advertisement. Sworn statements and hundreds of testimonials

on file. Give AGE and FULL PARTICULARS.

Dr. F. HARVEY ROOF

Dept. 1230, Station N, New York

MYSTERIOUS PLATE LIFTER.



Made of fine rubber, with bulb on one end and inflator at other. Place it under a table cover, under plate or glass, and bulb is pressed underneath, object rises mysteriously; 40 ins.

long. Price, 25c., postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

WIZARD'S PACK OF TRICK CARDS.



A full pack of 53 cards, but by the aid of the instructions given, anyone can perform the most wonderful tricks. Many of the feats exhibited are truly marvelous, and astonish and amuse a whole audience. Positively no sleight-of-hand. The whole trick is in the cards. Price, 35c. by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

EGGS OF PHARAOH'S SERPENTS.



A wonderful and startling novelty! "Pharaoh's Serpents" are produced from a small egg, no larger than a pea. Place one of them on a plate, touch fire to it with a common match, and instantly a large serpent, a yard or more in length, slowly uncoils itself from the burning egg. Each serpent assumes a different position. One will appear to be gliding over the ground, with head erect, as though spying danger; another will coil itself up, as if preparing for the fatal spring upon its victim, while another will stretch out lazily, apparently enjoying its usual noonday nap. Immediately after the egg stops burning, the serpent hardens, and may afterward be kept as an amusing curiosity. They are put up in wooden boxes, twelve eggs in a box. Price, 8c., 3 boxes for 20c.; 1 dozen boxes for 60c., sent by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

MUSICAL SEAT



The best joke out. You can have more fun than a circus, with one of these novelties. All you have to do is to place one on a chair seat (hidden under a cushion, if possible). Then tell your friend to sit down. An unearthly shriek from the little round drum will send your victim up in the air, the most puzzled and astonished mortal on earth. Don't miss getting one of these genuine laugh producers. Perfectly harmless, and never misses doing its work.

Price 20 cents each, by mail post-paid. WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

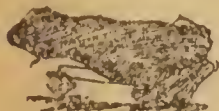
TRICK PUZZLE PURSE.



The first attempt usually made to open it, is to press down the little knob in the center of the purse, when a small needle runs out and stabs them in the finger, but does not open it. You can open it before their eyes and still they will be unable to open it.

Price, 25c. each by mail, postpaid.
H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

THE JUMPING FROG.



This little novelty creates a world of laughter. Its chief attractiveness is that it takes a few seconds before leaping high in the air, so that when set, very innocently along side of an unsuspecting person, he is suddenly startled by the wonderful activity of this frog. Price, 15c. each by mail postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

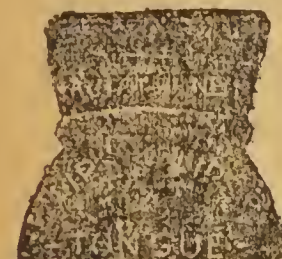
MANY TOOL KEY RING.



The wonder of the age. The greatest small tool in the world. In this little instrument you have in combination seven useful tools embracing Key Ring, Pencil Sharpener, Nail Cutter and Cleaner, Watch Opener, Cigar Clipper, Letter Opener and Screw Driver. It is not a toy, but a useful article, made of cutlery steel, tempered and highly nicked. Therefore will carry an edge the same as any piece of cutlery. As a useful tool, nothing has ever been offered to the public to equal it. Price, 15c., mailed, postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

THE AUTOPHONE.



A small musical instrument that produces very sweet musical notes by placing it between the lips with the tongue over the edge, and blowing gently into the instrument. The notes produced are not unlike those of the flute. We send full printed instructions whereby anyone can play anything they can hum, whistle or sing, with very little practice. Price, 10c.; 3 for 25c., mailed, postpaid.

A. A. WARFORD, 16 Hart St., Brooklyn, N. Y.



ELECTRIC PUSH BUTTON.

The base is made of maple, and the center piece of black wood, the whole thing about 1 1/4 inches in diameter, with a metal hook on the back so that it may be slipped over edge of the vest pocket. Expose to view your New Electric Bell, when your friend will push the button expecting to hear it ring. As soon as he touches it, you will see some of the liveliest dancing you ever witnessed. The Electric Button is heavily charged and will give a smart shock when the button is pushed. Price 10c., by mail, postpaid.

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